

## Pandemic Task Force

### Remote Operations Work Group

May 17, 2021

**Present:** Larry Lynch, Anthony Santiago, Jonathan Wilson, Jonathan Flannery, Niki Lemin, Tom Peterson, Steve Jones, Doug Farquhar

**Absent:** Adil Tamimi, Elizabeth Bednarcik, John Catlett

#### Second Meeting of the Workgroup.

Introductions

Applicable ICC Codes Overview

Teams Meeting Folder

Steering Committee

**Mission of the WG** – To identify policies and procedures to allow business and buildings to reopen/operate safely, to identify issues/solutions that can be implemented as code adoption changes as well as prior to code adoption changes, to modify codes to make buildings healthier for the occupant from threats caused by the pandemic or other health threats, to highlight successful policies that can be shared nationally. Codes should be the minimum standard.

**Goals of this WG:** The goal of this work group is to explore, identify and share those procedures/policies that make buildings (including residential and commercial, single and multifamily, public and private use) safe for occupants from the current and future health threats. Members should think of the health of people using the building, both the design and structure, to ensure buildings built to a specific code protect its occupants.

Specific policies may be applicable to certain codes based on building type or occupancy. Who will benefit from the adopted policies (code officials, design professionals, end users, the public, owners and operators?) Are the policies ones that can be implemented? In what circumstances?

**Products from this WG:** This workgroup is scheduled to meet monthly to learn about, discuss and share various policies that meet these goals. The result will be shared with the PTF for incorporation into a final document comprised of the work of all the work groups, and may be shared with jurisdictions for their adoption into a code or adopted in a specific ICC code.

#### Minutes from the May Meeting

The Pandemic Task Force Co-chair Niki Lemin recommended that Jonathan Flannery, Senior Associate Director of Advocacy for the American Society for Healthcare Engineering join the Remote Operations Work Group. He participated as a guest.

Remote Operations Co-Chair Anthony Santiago reached out to the US EPA Region 2 regarding the WG. A meeting with EPA R2 staff, Anthony and Doug Farquhar regarding the WG and its efforts.

Steering Committee

The Pandemic Task Force Steering Committee met immediately prior to the WG call. Anthony Santiago, Niki Lemin, Tom Peterson, Steve Jones and Doug Farquhar participated on the call. Larry Lynch had a prior commitment.

The Steering Committee reviewed the activities of the four WGs. Each of the WGs had a first meeting prior to this call. Members were introduced and reviewed their mission statements and goals. Most WGs goals were very specific to their group with the exception of the Remote Operations WG (RO WG). We have the broadest agenda encompassing the greatest number of buildings and situations.

Members from other WGs mentioned that their mission overlaps in other areas, making it difficult to address their mission solely. RO WG's mission appears to embrace all the WG's goals, meaning the RO WG focuses more on the occupants of buildings more so than the other WGs. This dilemma was reflected in our first WG call.

Neil Burning noted that the [Web Portal for the Task Force](#) had been created. It lists the four WGs along with each WGs meeting minutes, agendas and documents.

#### Applicable ICC Codes

The RO WG began the meeting by narrowing the discussion on applicable ICC Codes. Members noted that the WGs mission covers several codes, but members agreed that certain codes are directly applicable:

- [International Building Code \(IBC\)](#)
- [International Existing Building Code \(IEBC\)](#)
- [Property Maintenance Code \(PMC\)](#)

Other codes have relevance but these three codes are most pertinent to the WGs mission. Issues such as ventilation and HVAC are applicable but not as relevant.

Steve Jones agreed to reach out to see if the RO WG members could have access to these codes.

Johnathan Flannery noted that other groups are working on similar efforts. ASHRAE's Pandemic Task Force, BOMA and the Facility Guidelines Institute (FGI) are also studying which aspects of their policies should be revised to address health and pandemic concerns. ASHRAE and BOMA have been invited to participate in the Task Force.

Steve Jones noted that ICC codes should focus on the bare minimum necessary for all buildings to operate safely. Policies or measures beyond what is barely needed are considered 'above codes' or beyond continuity of operations. Steve said we should be clear on what is necessary v. what may be aspirational.

#### Teams Meeting Folder

Doug Farquhar attempted to create a Teams Meeting Folder, but apparently it was not set up properly. No one had access to the folder or documents in the folder.

Doug promised to try again and populate the folder with documents shared in the chat. The Teams Meeting Folder will include but be separate from [the Task Force Web Portal](#).

Members of the task force had several comments:

- i. Members discussed whether Dr. Jerome Paulson or Lindsay Mahr, U of VA should present at an upcoming meeting. Jonathan Wilson has been in contact with Lindsay Mahr, and said she is overly busy with responding to the pandemic. The RO WG will hold off inviting anyone until later.
- ii. Pandemics v. COVID-19. The WG agreed that the measures adopted will reflect making building healthy for occupants during pandemics, COVID or otherwise.
- iii. Codes should be the absolute minimum. A building code should represent the minimum of what how a building should be built and maintained. Options to make a building safer and more healthy can be suggested for a jurisdiction to adopt.
- iv. Best Practices. This WG should collect and review the best practices that make a building healthier for its occupants, such as ASHRAE's efforts or the NRA's guidelines for Restaurants. These Best Practices will be housed on the Teams.
- v. What does remote operations mean? The RO WG was formed to address how the regulatory community will operate remotely, how to perform inspections and reviews without visiting the business or building. How many things are impacted by remote operations? Temporary structures? RVIs? Remote working in the time of COVID-19?
- vi. Does Remote Operations reflect the WG's mission and goal? The mission and goal are fluid, and may evolve over the timeline of the project.

#### Follow-up

- vii. Doug F. will set up a WG Teams Folder for the members to submit Best Practices and other documents.
- viii. The Third Monday at 11 am ET will be the reoccurring time for the monthly calls