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State to celebrate Building Safety Week May 7-13

(Salem) — When you walk in the front door of your home, neighborhood school or library, or a high-rise office building downtown, you probably don't give a lot of thought to the safety of the building you are entering.

Thanks to the state-adopted building codes, and state and local code officials working with the construction industry, the structures in which Oregonians live, work, and play are built to meet standards that help ensure structural integrity, fire safety, air quality, accessibility to the disabled, and energy conservation.

"The codes are Oregonian's 'silent protectors,'" said Gov. Ted Kulongoski. "Codes provide minimum standards that not only help ensure that our buildings withstand earthquakes, floods, fires, and storms, but also protect us daily. Fire alarms, smoke detectors, venting for appliances, and shock-proof electrical switches are just a few of many protections we take for granted that are the result of code requirements."

Gov. Kulongoski has declared the week of May 7-13 Building Safety Week. To raise awareness for the event, the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services' Building Codes Division is partnering with the Oregon Building Officials Association, the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office, and the Construction Contractors Board with displays in the Capitol Galleria in Salem. People can visit the displays during the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"The codes serve two important public purposes. They safeguard the public's health, welfare, and life safety in buildings and ensure that construction is affordable and promotes the growth of Oregon's economy," said Mark Long, BCD administrator.

The Building Codes Division and OBOA's "Permits Protect" booth will highlight common code violations, and how using permits and employing licensed contractors ensures that a construction project meets code.

"Without permits and inspections, there are no safeguards that code requirements are met," said OBOA President Guy Sperb. "Simply put, permits protect the safety and value of your home or business."

The State Fire Marshal display will feature fire-resistant construction.

"Fire codes complement the building codes by maintaining fire-safety features built into a structure," said Deputy State Fire Marshal John Caul of OSFM's Codes and Technical Unit.

The CCB will emphasize consumer protection by offering information on the steps to take for a successful project.

"Using a licensed contractor offers protections that help ensure projects are built to code and industry standards," said Craig P. Smith, CCB administrator. "Checking out the contractor is easier than ever with the enhanced Web site (<http://oregon.gov/CCB>)."

Building Safety Week is an international event started by the International Code Council Foundation in 1980. Its purpose is to recognize the importance of making homes and buildings safe places where people can live, work, and play.

About Us

The Building Codes Division adopts and administers a statewide, uniform building code, licenses and certifies trade professionals and code officials, and works with Oregonians to ensure safe building construction while promoting a positive business climate.

OBOA is a not-for-profit organization that represents, supports, and enhances the efforts of building officials in providing for public safety through code administration.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office is dedicated to protecting citizens, their property, and the environment from fires and hazardous materials. The Oregon Fire Code is a statewide minimum fire code. Local jurisdictions may adopt and amend the state code as long as modifications are more stringent.

The Construction Contractors Board protects the public's interest relating to improvements to real property. The board regulates construction contractors and promotes a competitive business environment through education, contractor licensing, dispute resolution, and law enforcement.

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