



FACILITATING ENERGY CODE COMPLIANCE FOR ARCHITECTS

BARRIERS

CODE IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND

A survey conducted by the AIA showed that its membership generally considered the building codes unclear and difficult to comprehend.

COMPLIANCE & DESIGN ISOLATED

Code compliance and review efforts are typically conducted separately from design efforts. This leads to less coordination and more work for architects.

LOW ON THE PRIORITY LIST

Owners do not view code compliance work to be value creators and therefore architects are not incentivized to dedicate much time to those efforts. However, the energy code can be an opportunity to align the incentives of design professionals and their clients.

LACK OF INTEREST IN CODE

Architects are celebrated for their design abilities in their academic and professional careers. Building codes are commonly perceived as an obligation that does not contribute to, and potentially hinders, good design.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CODE BOOK COMPANION

- A companion guide to the energy code could be developed, with assistance from the ICC, architects, and other interested parties; to present the code in a manner that is more conducive to the way that architects communicate and retain information.

INTEGRATE DESIGN & COMPLIANCE

- Design has a tremendous impact in the effectiveness of the energy code but there is a disconnect between code compliance efforts and design work. One way to ease the burden on architects and improve compliance is to partner with software companies to integrate code compliance tools, like REScheck and COMcheck, with the design tools that they use in their daily operations.

EDUCATE PROFESSIONALS

- The AIA already provides educational material related to technical aspects of the energy code. Courses could also be developed to educate architects on the economic drivers that inform client decisions. This knowledge can help them to effectively communicate to clients the impact that energy related design decisions can have.

ENGAGE STUDENTS

- It is important to reach out to architecture programs to discuss the impact that energy performance and the energy code can have on design. Courses could be developed in partnership with energy efficiency and sustainability experts and integrated into the coursework for interested architecture programs.