

TRAINING HARD SAVES ENERGY

Need to learn about building energy codes? DOE's Building Energy Codes Program (BECP) offers a wealth of free training in a variety of formats that speak to a wide range of experience and knowledge levels. BECP can help, whether you are a novice homeowner who needs to apply for a permit to add a new room or a professional architect, builder, or code official who needs to know all of a code's technical requirements.

One of BECP's goals is to improve the energy efficiency of our nation's buildings through new technologies and better building practices. Training is key to achieving that goal.

BECP offers in-person training at meetings and large conferences, and the program keeps pace with modern training technologies. It maximizes the number of people trained by providing an array of online tools through the BECP Web site (www.energycodes.gov).

The Web site averages more than 3 million hits per month. In 2006, more than 6,500 people participated in its Webcasts, nearly 7,500 people took part in self-paced training, and over 900 participated in in-person training events. In total, more than 22,000 people used BECP training resources last year.

Online training makes attendance easy and comfortable. You can earn American Institute of Architects (AIA) learning unit hours and International Code Council (ICC) continuing education credits without leaving the comfort of your own computer. Or go that extra mile and attend the annual Energy Codes conference, a four-day training event that offers information about energy codes- and standards-related topics as well as an opportunity to network with the energy code community.



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Webcasts

BECP's Webcasts continue to grow in popularity, averaging over 650 participants per event. Webcasts allow participants to learn about everything from the residential and commercial requirements of the 2006 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) to the best way to show energy code compliance for log homes in a dynamic question-and-answer session at the end of every live Webcast.

All questions are addressed—either during the live event or afterward. Those who miss the live broadcast can view the archived video on the Web site at their convenience.

Self-Paced Tools

As the name suggests, self-paced tools allow users to learn about a specific topic at their own pace, anytime and anywhere. The tools also offer access to more detailed

information about the topic of interest by providing links to other resources.

Codes 101. The Codes 101 tool covers the basics of codes and standards. It describes the process by which codes and standards are developed, and the adoption, implementation, and enforcement of codes. It also discusses voluntary energy efficiency programs.

REScheck 101 and COMcheck 101. These tools provide everything one needs to get started with BECP's easy-to-use energy code compliance software, REScheck and COMcheck, which are used in more than 35 states. The self-paced tools allow trainees to practice the lessons learned by doing example compliance reports.

Resource Center and Code Notes

The BECP Resource Center is a one-stop information source for building energy codes. This online resource links users to energy codes and beyond-code construction techniques and technologies. It offers detailed information on topics ranging from how to frame window headers for additional insulation to the latest research on mold and moisture. Information is available in a variety of formats, including articles, graphics, presentations, and videos.

Code Notes are code explanations written for code officials, complete with code references and detailed drawings. They help builders obtain code compliance for energy-efficient technologies; discuss code and standard requirements; clarify the confusing language of some codes and standards; and address questions regarding building features.

Glossary, Calendar, and Presentations

The online Building Energy Codes Glossary demystifies the code world's

acronym-rich vocabulary and defines common energy code terms.

BECP's Calendar of Events lists buildings-related conferences and workshops as well as state and national energy code training classes. Visitors to the Web site are encouraged to add upcoming events.

PowerPoint presentations, on topics ranging from how to conduct a residential plan review to the specific requirements of the 2006 IECC, are available to anyone who wants to learn more about technical topics. The presentations contain detailed faculty notes and can be modified by trainers who need to prepare their own presentations.

Continuing Education Credits

Most BECP training materials are reviewed and approved by the AIA and acknowledged by the ICC. Trainees can

- earn AIA learning unit hours by participating in online training—Webcasts, videos, and self-paced tools—and scoring at least 80% on a test;
- earn continuing education credits toward renewal of ICC certification; and
- print a Certificate of Completion and self-report the activity to the appropriate professional organizations.

State Grants

BECP also awards grants to the states to help promote the adoption, implementation, and enforcement of energy codes. In 2006, states applied their grants to train over 7,500 people through videos, Webcasts, and hands-on training. Through BECP grants, some states

- work one-on-one with builders to discuss construction techniques and how they relate to codes, offer suggestions for improving construction, and provide technical assistance; and
- incorporate building science lessons into their energy code compliance training, explaining to trainees why code requirements make sense from a building science perspective.



—**Rosemarie Bartlett**

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