7-24-1973

Letter from J.G. Degenkolb to Jim Bihr

J. G. Degenkolb

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July 24, 1973

Jim Bihr, Managing Director
International Conference of Building Officials
5360 South Workman Mill Road
Whittier, California 90601

Dear Jim:

I've been receiving inquiries concerning a proposed UBC Standard on Smoke Detectors. I had hoped to see you at Airlie and discuss the matter with you and Dick Bright, but when you canceled out, I discussed the matter briefly with Dick.

As I understand the questions, the proposed UBC Standard will incorporate tests for which no test facility presently exists. Dick tells me that UL is considering a 12' x 8' x 8' room test but has not proposed such a modification of the tests to the manufacturers who would be concerned. After they do consider it and details are worked out, there will be a considerable delay in implementation and also a delay in testing. There are other features of the proposed UBC Standard with which the manufacturers are not familiar which are apparently called for in the proposed Standard.

I would like to urge that until meetings have been held with the manufacturers, UBC Research Recommendations be granted based on conformance with UL 167 for ionization detectors, UL 168 for photoelectric detectors and the applicable portions of NFPA 74 (omitting the heat detector consideration).

With the 1973 code now in publication and being adopted, I believe it is essential that I.C.B.O. have several listings. When better test standards are developed and agreed upon, future listing of detectors would have to be based on conformance with the improved Standards. At Airlie we were informed that FM is in the process of examining detectors, their placement, etc. under a RANN grant.

I think it would be most advantageous if you would contact the concerned companies and hold a meeting to discuss the proposed UBC Standard. I'm certain that PYROTRONICS, STATITROL, ELECTRO-SIGNAL LAB and BRK would attend since they have shown primary interest.

Certain officials have indicated that, without several I.C.B.O. listings, they would be inclined to delete the residential detector requirement.
As you know, BOCA has adopted a similar requirement for residential detectors. Southern will probably adopt a similar provision in October. John Jablonsky said that the 1974 edition of the National Building Code (due out in January) will have a similar requirement. Quinton Wells of HUD said that a year after the MPS is published, probably in September, HUD will require home detectors. The NFPA Standard on Mobile Homes requires a smoke detector and an emergency action has been taken (supposedly) by NFPA 101 to require detectors in homes. All have indicated that a UL listing will be acceptable. I would hate to see UBC take a contrary position at this stage of the game. The testing currently being done by Dick Bright, Factory Mutual, Los Angeles City etc. are, at best, just that - test research. It will be some time before their conclusions are developed. I believe that we can accept smoke detectors on the basis of meeting the provisions of UL 168, UL 167 and NFPA 74 for the time being.

Sincerely,

JOHN G. DEGENKOLB

JGD:mfh
Enclosure