

Frequently Asked Questions Building Department Accreditation

What is accreditation?

Accreditation is formal third-party recognition that a body fulfills specified requirements and is competent to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks.

Accreditation of your building department or code enforcement agency provides independent third-party recognition that your organization has demonstrated that it is competent to carry out specific code enforcement tasks and to assess and control the quality of these specific code enforcement activities. The IAS accreditation criteria requires verification that building departments and code enforcement agencies operate under the highest ethical, legal and technical standards and that they have the ability to offer the public enhanced life safety and property protection.

Accreditation may be even more important for professional organizations such as building departments and code enforcement agencies because they are responsible for public safety and welfare.

What is the process for getting accredited?

The process for becoming an accredited building department begins when you contact IAS. We will answer your questions about the program and then guide you through the accreditation process, which includes submittal of an application, applicable fees, basic information about the jurisdiction and technical information about the department. Once this information has been reviewed, our staff will visit your department to conduct an onsite pre-evaluation and develop an evaluation report. This information is used to assist the department in preparing for the on-site full evaluation visit by IAS. When the building department has satisfied IAS accreditation requirements and demonstrated proficiency and competence, an accreditation certificate will be issued.

What criteria does IAS use to assess building departments?

The criteria for Building Department Accreditation is AC251, which is available at www.iasonline.org.

What are the benefits?

Building departments can derive many benefits from IAS accreditation, such as:

- A proactive, continuous plan of improvement for departments
- Reports and analyses that make possible informed management decisions
- Improved relationship with the community
- Increased department efficiency and improved day-to-day operations
- An opportunity to partner with other code enforcement experts in a team-building environment to help identify strengths or potential problem areas and provide recommendations to bring building departments in line with national standards
- Documented proof from a leading accreditation authority that the department uses the best practices and maintains the highest standards in code enforcement in order to offer enhanced life safety and property protection to the public
- Strengthened departmental accountability
- Limits on liability and risk exposure
- Accreditation, moreover, sends a strong statement to your community about your desire to provide services of the highest quality.

What is the cost?

The fees vary depending on the size of the department staff, area of jurisdiction, and special geographic or environmental circumstances. A list of the fees and an application are available on the IAS web site at www.iasonline.org. IAS is happy to provide you with a quote for your department.

How long does it take to get accredited?

The time it takes to get accredited varies, depending on the size of the department, the amount of time the department takes to prepare and submit materials to IAS, and the length of time it takes the department to resolve *Concerns* or *Corrective Action Requests* following the evaluation.

Who is IAS?

Operating as an accreditation body since 1975, IAS is the nation's leading provider of building department accreditation. IAS is also an internationally recognized accreditation body under mutual recognition arrangements with ILAC and APLAC, the international organizations that oversee the proper operation and compliance with international standards of bodies that accredit testing laboratories, calibration laboratories and inspection bodies. IAS is also a subsidiary corporation of the International Code Council® (ICC®), a membership association that develops the building safety and fire prevention codes used in construction of residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Most U.S. cities, counties and states that adopt codes choose the International Codes® developed by the International Code Council.