

NCARB Live Follow-Up: Study Materials & IBC

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Jared Zurn [00:00]: Welcome everybody to another NCARB video, where we're going to answer questions for our most recent NCARB Live. And in this video, we're answering questions about study materials and questions related to the IBC on the examination. So, I'll kick us off with question number one.

Jared Zurn [00:16]: **It says NCARB stated that the exam content wasn't changing, but then switched the International Building Codes (IBC) from 2015 to 2018. Has NCARB vetted every exam question for discrepancies between the codes and/or any applicable differences required in calculation questions?**

And the answer to that is yes, we have. We go through a quality assurance review any time forms are updated with building codes, which happens about every three years and that process has taken place. So that way, any code-related question, when we launch the online proctoring option, will be updated to 2018, including any reference tables or things like that.

Michelle Cohn [00:58]: Great. Our next question is:

Why didn't NCARB give candidates more notice of the IBC change?

Well, we're able to provide that notice as soon as we knew that the change was going to happen. And again, the changes in the codes, we don't expect that candidates are memorizing codes. They're certainly not expected to memorize the codes. The way the codes are tested on the ARE is really again about just applying code information to a specific scenario.

So really that change in code doesn't have a significant impact on the candidate's ability to do well on the exam. It's really just about using the information given to you to then apply that to the question that you see on your test.

Jared Zurn [01:43]: So our next question is:

Can NCARB share more details on how the IBC change will impact candidates and the exam?

So, it's really not going to impact candidates or the exam. And the reason being is that when we go from 2015 to 2018, as Michelle said, there's no real major changes. If a table was updated, it's updated. When you're testing, if you could see the table before, you'll be able to see the table now. So, from an exam experience perspective, from a level of difficulty of questions perspective, all of that's going to stay exactly the same.

Michelle Cohn [02:16]: All right. Another question similar here:

Are you accounting for the change in occupant load for business from 100 in the 2015 code to 150 with the implementation of the 2018 code?

So once again, yes, absolutely. As Jared mentioned, we do a pretty rigorous quality control check on our items. And so this was one of the things that our committee's looked at really closely to make sure that any specific code information included in questions or in response options was updated to match the 2018 code.

Jared Zurn [02:51]: Our next question gets into test prep. It says:

If Black Spectacles is an approved test prep provider, do we expect them to update their practice tests?

And I would say from the perspective of just in general updating their practice tests, they're not going to have to make changes because content is content. If you can prepare using their tests today, the content really isn't changing for 5.0 with online proctoring. So, they're not going to have to make many updates. If they do have some very specific code questions that need to be updated, then yes, they should be updating those code questions to align the 2018 where appropriate.

Michelle Cohn [03:32]: Next question.

Do you have a comprehensive list of reference books to study for these exams?

And yes, we do actually. That is in the *ARE 5.0 Handbook*, which you can find on our website. We have the version that's been in place since 5.0 launched. And it has been recently updated to include some additional information related to online proctoring.

We have a lot of references included in that. At the end of each division that's discussed in that Handbook, we have the top three to five references that we recommend that you study. That you can expect to see some material from those references on your exam. We have a much longer list of references at the back of the Handbook. That's about, I think, five pages now of references. It's in a matrix, to show you how each reference might be represented in different divisions.

Sometimes in multiple divisions, one reference might come in handy for studying for multiple divisions. And that can be a really great place to start your studying. We're not saying that you should review every single book on that list. It's quite extensive. That would be quite a lot of studying. And if you needed to purchase all of those, it could really add up. But what we are suggesting is that a lot of those books, you might already have them. Maybe on your personal bookshelf, maybe on the bookshelf in your office, maybe your AIA chapter has copies to loan out. Any of the books on that list could be useful for studying for those exams.

And why do we say that they're useful is because those are the books most frequently used by our volunteer item writers when they're actually writing the exam content. So we are bringing

that list of books direct from our item writers to you in the hopes that it will help you as you prepare for your exams.

Jared Zurn [05:19]: And our last question in this section is:

Are there going to be study materials from NCARB to help people narrow down what to study?

What we need to point out is that NCARB doesn't provide direct study materials. What NCARB provides is the *ARE 5.0 Handbook*, which outlines the objectives that you as a candidate are going to need to demonstrate knowledge and skill in as part of the examination.

It's really then up to you as a candidate to decide what areas do you think you need to in because some of you, based on your education and experience, may not need to do any additional study in certain objectives, because you've done it and you know it, you're good to go.

You really should use the Handbook as your guide to narrow down the areas you need to focus on to prepare. And then as Michelle had said, then reference some of those key books to just fill in any gaps that you may have.

Jared Zurn [06:14]: So that brings us to the end of our questions related to study materials and the IBC questions. We hope you found this helpful and check out the other videos from NCARB Live.