

Crossing the Willey Bridge into Richmond, not a single part of my mind wonders about the structural integrity of the bridge. I am able to enjoy myself because I don't have any nagging precautions about the foundations of the buildings I enter. Building codes increase the level of confidence within a community by providing people with oblivion and fostering trust within the citizens.

When I walk through the doors of my high school, the last thing on my mind is whether or not the building will collapse. The gift of building codes allows me to feel secure and gives me the ability to focus on my own life. I can think about homework, tests, grades, my friends, sports, and silly drama. Building codes allow me to be a typical teenager and give me the confidence I need to focus on myself.

A few weeks back I attended my school's prom at the John Marshall Hotel. When I walked up the steps to the ballroom I wasn't worried about whether or not the floor could hold all of the students. I was more focused on greeting my friends, whether or not my hair was still in place, and if my makeup was running. When I was dancing to Journey's "Don't Stop Believing" I was not thinking about whether or not the fire exits were marked or if we had reached capacity. Instead I was able to get caught up in the night and enjoy my last dance as a high schooler.

In less than a month I will be walking across the stage at the Siegel Center to accept my diploma. I don't think a single person in the crowd will be thinking about whether or not the building has been tested for asbestos. Instead, proud parents will be worrying about trying to get a good shot of their child shaking the principal's hand. My classmates will be thinking about how long they've been waiting for that moment, and hoping they don't trip on the stage.

After college, I plan to be a teacher and I doubt that building codes will be a part of the curriculum I teach. But this doesn't mean that they won't be a big part of my life. Building codes will constantly be in place to keep me safe. My welfare is in the hands of these written codes and the officials who ensure their adherence.

I am just a drop in the proverbial bucket. There are thousands of people like me within our community that are able to be more confident because of their trust in our building codes and the reliance of building code officials.

Building codes allow us to live our lives and they take away our fears. They provide us with stability and give us something to rely on. Sure, some people take them for granted, but that is what increases a community's confidence. People rarely second guess building codes, they're too caught up in their own stories. Because of building codes, we can be more carefree, living our lives to the fullest. Building codes affect people by allowing them to live unaffected.