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# AB 176 CHILD CARE CENTER WORK GROUP

## Meeting Minutes – September 11, 2026

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## I. CALL TO ORDER at 8:41 AM PDT

- A. Welcome/Introductions – Jena Garcia (filling in for Crystal Sujeski) and Lya Johnson
  - 1. The meeting was called to order and participants were welcomed by Jena Garcia. Attendees were reminded that their microphones should remain muted throughout the session, and that the raise-hand feature should be used when wishing to contribute to discussion. She noted that the chat function would be monitored for questions, which would be addressed as each relevant agenda item was covered. Participants were also informed that the meeting was being recorded.
  - 2. Before proceeding, Lya Johnson emphasized — as noted at the top of the agenda — that this work group pertains exclusively to childcare centers, and not to family childcare homes. Any attendees representing family childcare homes were advised that the discussion would not address their facility type.
- B. [Agenda/Minutes Review - January 9, 2026 Minutes](#)
  - 1. Jena Garcia directed attendees to the OSFM [Code Development and Analysis Work Groups](#) webpage, where agendas and meeting minutes are posted, and noted that the link would be dropped in the chat for convenience. She explained that the January 9, 2026 meeting had been the most recent gathering, and gave context for the extended gap between meetings: the work group had been waiting on the model code to begin drafting language and the model code had still not been received at the time of this meeting, with receipt anticipated in mid-October. Despite that, the work group is operating under firm deadlines.
  - 2. Jena Garcia walked attendees through the meeting minutes interface on the webpage, noting that a YouTube recording link — accessible only via the direct link embedded in the minutes, not through a general YouTube search — is included at the bottom of each set of minutes.

## II. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Tabled items from the Intervening Code Cycle
  - 1. Jena Garcia provided a thorough overview of what had transpired during the intervening code cycle — the period during which corrections to building standards may be submitted. The work group had previously brought forward various proposals, which were posted during the 45-day public comment period and can be found on the [Building Standards Commission](#) website.

2. Following commission hearings held at the end of August, all of the Child Care Center Work Group's proposals were withdrawn. Jena Garcia directed attendees to the [commission action matrix on the Building Standards Commission's website](#), where the outcome is documented. Items one and two — which related to definitions — are shown there with the agency's notation that public feedback warranted further study. Jena Garcia noted that the majority of public commenters were individuals who participate in the Child Care Center Work Group itself.
3. Jena Garcia summarized the key policy issue that drove the withdrawal: specifically, feedback indicated that the proposal to delete a definition and add an adult to the definition of "daycare" — keeping it separate and distinct — needed more work. These are among the items the work group will need to revisit going forward.
4. Jena Garcia then introduced a tracking spreadsheet that has been created to document topics needing further attention, including the reason each topic requires action and the individual leading that discussion within the work group. She characterized the spreadsheet as a rough draft and indicated it needed to be opened up for collaborative discussion.
5. Melanee Cottrill raised a clarifying process question, stating that she had been in email correspondence with Crystal Sujeski prior to the meeting, who had indicated that the proposals were pulled due to a change in state law — specifically related to what can be included in triennial code cycles. Melanee indicated some confusion, having not realized the proposals were moving through the process before being pulled.
6. Jena Garcia responded by explaining the impact of [AB 130](#), which restricts the creation of new building standards with regard to specific occupancy classifications, with some exceptions. She clarified: if a law passes that is specific to an item, it may supersede the AB 130 restrictions. Cleanup to the code that falls within AB 130's parameters may proceed, but proposals that would create new regulations cannot be submitted under that framework.
7. Jena Garcia then recognized Greg Cobabe, Principal Fire & Life Safety Officer with the Division of the State Architect (DSA), who had joined the meeting. Greg introduced himself and confirmed that DSA is present to provide input on public schools (K–12) and community colleges, where daycare and after-school programs are frequently found. He affirmed Jena Garcia's description of AB 130's impact — noting that it effectively put a halt on substantive changes to the code, with very limited exceptions such as fire hazard severity zones and WUI areas. Greg asked for confirmation that the withdrawn proposals would move forward in the next triennial, and Jena confirmed that this was indeed the goal. Greg expressed strong support for those proposals moving forward, noting: "There were very good proposals that would obviously clarify childcare centers and such."
8. Melanee Cottrill acknowledged the clarification, noting that she had only had half the story and that having the full context was helpful.
9. Jena Garcia then opened the floor to discuss the frequency of meetings going forward. Given the February 1st internal deadline, she suggested monthly meetings — specifically the second Friday of each month — through January, providing October, November, December, and January meetings and noted that

consensus of the work group would be required to move anything into the rulemaking package.

10. Greg Cobabe gave a thumbs up, as did several other attendees.
11. Lya Johnson interjected that it might be helpful to first review the timeline before finalizing the meeting schedule, prompting Jena Garcia to navigate to the [timeline](#).

### III. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Child Care Webinar

1. Jena Garcia announced that the State Fire Marshal's office is co-hosting a [childcare center webinar](#), and noted that while the registration information was not yet visible on the main webpage at the time of the meeting, an announcement had been published on the agency's social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and others), and registration is required given limited virtual seats.
2. Deputy State Fire Marshal III Specialist Chrishana Fields introduced herself and provided details on the webinar. She indicated it was scheduled for September 30th at 1:30 PM, and that it would cover the requirements for Group E and Group I-4 occupancies — specifically the differences between the two classifications, fire protection requirements, and building standards requirements. She described the webinar as educational in nature, noting that attendees would be able to submit questions in advance, which would be addressed during the presentation. A [registration link](#) was to be posted in the chat.
3. Lya Johnson added context, noting that the webinar is primarily intended for childcare center providers seeking to understand occupancy classifications and what those distinctions mean in practice. Local fire agencies would also benefit from the content. She noted that the session would also include information about how licensing evaluates capacity when visiting a facility — making it a foundational resource for a broad audience, and indicated the public was welcome to attend if interested.

#### B. Building Standards Commission Timeline

1. Jena Garcia shared the Building Standards Commission's timeline document, which had also been presented at the January meeting. She directed attendees to the BSC website under the [2027 Triennial Code Adoption Cycle](#) rulemaking section, where a PDF timeline is available for download. She clarified that the work group is focused on the BFO package (Building, Fire, and Other), which covers Part 2 (Building Code) and Part 9 (Fire Code) — the portions containing occupancy classification provisions, Chapter 4 provisions for I-4 occupancies, and related items.
2. Jena Garcia emphasized that the State Fire Marshal's internal deadline for all BFO packages — including this work group's output — is a hard stop of February 1st. This internal deadline exists to allow time for: review by an economist, leadership approval, agency approval, submission to the Department of Finance, and submission to the Building Standards Commission by approximately May 3rd. She noted that BSC prefers earlier submission, and that the internal approval process requires approximately a 90-day window.

3. Jena Garcia stressed that whatever proposals emerge from the work group must reflect consensus and should ideally be finalized in January — not on February 1st itself.
  4. Lya Johnson expressed relief at the February 1st clarification, noting that a comment had been made earlier suggesting a shorter timeline, and that monthly meetings would be sufficient given that deadline.
  5. Melanee Cottrill suggested that sub-work groups could conduct work between monthly meetings — an approach she noted had worked effectively in the prior year. Lya Johnson agreed, describing the previous model as highly productive: sub-work groups handled detailed, behind-the-scenes analysis, while the monthly main group meetings served as a forum for gathering together and reviewing progress.
  6. Greg Cobabe raised his hand to confirm that monthly meetings at 8:30 AM on Fridays were an appropriate time, while noting that Fridays are generally busy for virtual meetings. Jena Garcia confirmed the time slot would remain the same, and Lya Johnson concurred.
  7. Greg Cobabe also asked whether the withdrawn proposals would be reopened for discussion or whether the group would move forward from where they stopped. Jena Garcia confirmed that those proposals would be revisited, and Greg expressed that this made sense.
  8. Jena Garcia also noted that there may be new items to add beyond the withdrawn proposals, given that certain restrictions during the intervening cycle may have limited what was brought forward at that time.
- C. Topics needing further review
1. Jena Garcia introduced the tracking table created to manage topics needing further review — covering both items withdrawn from the intervening cycle and any newly identified topics. She invited attendees to submit new topics via the work group's general email inbox: [cdaworkgroups@fire.ca.gov](mailto:cdaworkgroups@fire.ca.gov), with a request to title submissions clearly for agenda tracking purposes. The link to the inbox was dropped into the chat.
  2. No raised hands or chat submissions for new topics to immediately add were received at that time. Jena Garcia indicated the group would continue to monitor the chat and accept submissions going forward.

#### **IV. ROUNDTABLE/ PUBLIC COMMENT**

- A. Lya Johnson facilitated this portion of the meeting, working through a number of questions that had been submitted in the chat.
1. Question from Sarina Lynn — Impact on Childcare Centers if Recommendations Are Not Adopted: Sarina asked whether, if the February 1st recommendations are submitted but not ultimately adopted, there was any risk that some initial code language could be implemented on childcare centers without additional funding being available. Lya acknowledged she was inferring from context that Sarina may be asking specifically about fire sprinkler requirements and addressed that assumption directly. Lya clarified that fire sprinklers were not included in the work group's prior recommendations and confirmed that those requirements are not currently on the table. She noted that the changes addressed through AB 176 had been rolled back, and that the work going forward is a continuation of the prior work group effort — focused on alignment

with other codes, CCL requirements, and overall best outcomes for health and safety. Lya was careful to note: "We're all going into this with open minds and fully understanding the impact on our facilities, fully understanding the impact on our local fire agencies — all with the goal of protecting the health and safety of children." She emphasized that should any recommendations involving increased infrastructure be brought forward in the future, full financial impact review would be conducted through the work group process. Jena Garcia confirmed that Lya had accurately summarized the situation.

2. Question from Sarina Lynn and Ernesto— [Webinar Registration Link](#): Inquiries as to whether the webinar registration link had been posted. Melanee Cottrill posted the link in the chat.
3. Question from Gary Andary — Status of Proposed Revision to Section 3080.51: Gary asked whether the proposed revision to Section 3080.51 regarding childcare centers remains tabled, and whether the conditions and limitations of AB 176 are continuing. Lya responded that the plan is to continue the work that was undertaken during the prior year's work group effort. She acknowledged that following the completion of the work group's proposals, several areas of unintended consequences and code overlap had been identified that warranted further review. She framed the ongoing effort as a continuation and refinement — not an abandonment — of the prior work: "I don't mean cleaning it up in a bad way but cleaning it up to make sure that we are in alignment with other codes, other requirements — that we have alignment with the CCL requirements and that we have the best possible outcome." Jena Garcia confirmed that Section 3080.51 remains open for discussion and nothing has been formally tabled by this work group.
4. Question from Amanda — How to Get Up to Speed: Amanda identified herself as new to the topic and asked what she should research to catch up. The Chair directed her to the work group's webpage, where all prior meeting minutes are posted — each with an accompanying recording link. Jena Garcia recommended reviewing fire code definitions for childcare centers and relevant provisions in Chapter 2 and Chapter 9 of the fire code, as well as occupancy classification materials pertaining to Group E and Group I-4 facilities.
5. Question from Megan Quinn — Status of Information Bulletin IB 24-012: Megan asked whether Information Bulletin IB 24-012 remains in place until the code is formally adopted. Jena Garcia confirmed that the information bulletin will remain in effect unless and until it requires an update for any specific reason.
6. Clarification on Work Group Participation: In response to a general question about how members of the public can participate, Jena Garcia explained that the work group is open to the public, and that attendance at monthly meetings constitutes participation — which is why attendees are tracked through the virtual lobby. For those wishing to be more deeply involved, Jena explained that volunteering to participate in a sub-work group is the appropriate path. Sub-work groups focus on specific items or sections of the code, with collaboration occurring outside of the main monthly meetings, and bring proposals forward to the full group with greater backing and detail.
7. Follow-Up from Sarina Quinn — Funding and Prior Fire Safety Requirements: Sarina submitted a longer question asking about the funding impact of additional fire safety measures that had been required prior to AB 176. Lya provided a

clarifying summary: AB 176 rolled back those requirements to the pre-amendment state. She confirmed, with a caveat to Jena to correct her if needed, that the new code does not include the previously added fire sprinkler requirements, and that those requirements have not been reintroduced in the current proposed amendments. Accordingly, the associated funding concerns have not been triggered. Lya reiterated that should those types of requirements ever be proposed in the future, the full financial impact study and work group consideration process would apply. Jena affirmed the summary.

- B. Jena Garcia also reminded attendees of the work group charter, which describes in detail what the group is charged with doing, and noted that a link to the [charter](#) was being posted in the chat.

## **V. UPCOMING MEETING DATES**

### **A. Next Meeting**

1. Based on discussion earlier in the meeting, the group reached consensus to hold monthly meetings on the second Friday of each month at 8:30 AM, continuing through January 2026. This provides meetings in October, November, December, and January — with the January meeting serving as the final opportunity to finalize proposals ahead of the February 1st internal deadline. The exact dates were to be confirmed and communicated to the group.

## **VI. MEETING ADJOURNMENT AT 9:38 AM PDT**

- A. The meeting was adjourned with no further business.

\*Please [subscribe](#) to the “OSFM Committee and Workgroup Updates” mailing list to receive updates

If you would like to watch the recording of this meeting, please visit the link below:

<https://youtu.be/dgqqVK5Puno>

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