



IMPARTIALITY

President's Message from
"CASI CENTRAL" Winter 2016 Newsletter

CASp Impartiality.

The question of CASp impartiality has come up in several public meetings over the past year, and I think it is worth discussing. On more than one occasion I have witnessed first-hand that the advocates for the disabled community have pressed hard to have CASps serve their interest more. While I empathize with the advocates, I have to 'push back' and press for independence and impartiality.

A CASp has no authority to make anyone do anything

We CASps are experts in our field; we take in the data, analyze it, and develop a report or other instrument of our service. We hand that document over to our client, and **they** decide what to do with that information. CASps do not over-rule architects or building officials, nor do we have the authority of a judge or a building official to act on behalf of the people of California. In the end we offer our expert opinion, and others decide what to do with that opinion.

CASps must 'Interpret' code

Anybody can read the code and have an opinion. Which means that nobody really needs a CASp's services at all unless that CASp can go deeper in their understanding of the reasoning and purpose behind the code. We need to be able to take the black-and-white code language, and put it into a specific project context and make logical sense out of it. It does go beyond what is black-and-white. We must interpret the code.

'Interpret' does not mean we 'Advocate'

We can influence the decisions makers with our 'interpretations', but we are still expected to be impartial. Nobody wants to know what the code 'should' say, or what the code minimum 'ought' to be, they want to know what it actually is, so that they as the decision makers can make a well-informed decision.

We bring value because we are impartial

It is precisely our non-alliance with the advocates on either side that brings value to the industry we serve. The moment we align with one side or the other, our opinions lose their value. Most of the decision-makers are themselves impartial. Judges, building officials, and architects all are looking to CASps for insight into the most accurate, best understanding of the not-so-clear sections of code. We exist to help them understand these things and put them into perspective.

A place for all of us

Is there a place for CASps who are also disabled advocates? Of course. Likewise, there is also a place for CASps who look out for the interests of the building owners.

The caveat is this: We CASps, need to be clear with everyone when we move beyond an impartial analysis of the code (and ADA) minimums and into an advisory role.



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CASI 2015-2016 President