
Director's Office, 350 Winter St. NE, Room 200, Salem, Oregon 97301-3878

For immediate release:
August 6, 2003

For more information:
Richard Rogers, (503) 378-4472
or Dian Cox, DCBS, (503) 947-7897

Building code to eliminate wire-glass exception for fire-rated assemblies

(Salem) The state Building Codes Division is moving forward on an amendment to the Oregon Structural Specialty Code that will eliminate an exception that has allowed wire glass to be used in areas subject to human impact in fire-rated assemblies in schools and other commercial buildings. Oregon is making these changes so that all glass in areas subject to human impact will meet recognized impact standards.

For years, nationally recognized codes, upon which the OSSC is based, have exempted wire glass from having to meet the impact ratings established in Uniform Building Code Standard 24-2 when it is used in fire-rated assemblies. This exemption was necessary because there were no glass products available that met both impact testing and the fire-rated assembly standards.

“This only applies to new construction and replacements of wire-glass windows in areas subject to human impact in commercial structures and schools,” said Richard Rogers, BCD interim structural chief. “Typically this means glass like that installed in or immediately adjacent to doors where a person could conceivably hit the glass hard enough to break it.”

The amendment will be adopted in two phases. On October 1, 2003, all wire glass in educational facilities must meet the impact standards. This step will make Oregon consistent with the current provisions adopted by the national model code groups. The second phase, effective October 1, 2004, will require all glass in newly constructed commercial buildings to comply.

Rogers said that Oregon code up to now has permitted wire glass in fire-rated assemblies in areas subject to human impact as a compromise, opting for fire safety. “Wire glass could take the heat,” he said, “but not the impact.”

Representatives of Advocates for Safe Glass, based in Eugene, glass manufacturers, and others with an interest in the wire-glass topic attended a public hearing in Salem, May 20. The public hearing followed two years of study of the wire-glass issue by a BCD ad hoc committee, review by the Structural Code Committee, and referral for public hearing by Building Codes Structures Board.

Hazardous locations for human impact in educational facilities and commercial buildings are specified in the OSSC, Sections 2406.3 and 2406.4.

####