



Clackamas
Multnomah
Washington
COUNTIES

A BCD field office, the Tri-County Service Center administers the minor label program and coordinates forms, processes, and application of code for building programs in Clackamas, Multnomah, & Washington counties.

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News Connect

A quarterly newsletter for mechanical contractors

August-October 2004

PMCA to sponsor forum

The Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Association will sponsor a free forum on mechanical code issues, 4-7 p.m. Thursday, September 23, at the Multnomah County Board Room, 501 S.E. Hawthorne, Portland.

Qualified participants can earn three hours of code-related continuing-education credit from BCD, three hours' master-builder continuing-education credit, three hours' home-inspector credit from CCB, or three hours' HSW credit.

The purpose of the forum is to discuss regional code applications and reach consensus on acceptable standards for the tri-county region. All area mechanical contractors, remodelers, architects, and building-department personnel are invited. ♦

Agenda

- Q and A
- Code adoption update

April 22 code forum questions and answers

Tri-County building officials have agreed to use the code panel's determinations for inspection standards. If you work in a jurisdiction outside of the tri-county region, please contact local building officials for inspection standards.

Contractors and building-department personnel may send questions for the code panel to Joanie. M.Stevens-Schwenger@state.or.us or fax them to the center, (503) 872-6735. An answer-request form is available on the BCD Web site, www.oregonbcd.org. Click on "Tri-County" and then "Code Forum Program."

Update

3M Commercial kitchen duct fire protection Duct Wrap 15A System — 3M Commercial kitchen duct fire protection Duct Wrap 15A System is now approved, but with very specific installation requirements.

Q Concerning Statewide Interpretation No. 304.9 — Guards for retrofit roof-top units:

- **Whose responsibility is it to verify that the original installation was permitted and installed to code?**
- **Is a contractor who has been asked to replace, repair, or lift the equipment for re-roofing, who has purchased a permit to do the work, required to:**
 - a) prove there was a permit for the original installation?
 - b) bring the other parts of the mechanical system up to current code regarding duct insulation, smoke alarms, fire dampers, etc.

A The code panel agreed that it is not the contractor's responsibility to verify that the original installation was permitted and inspected to code, nor is it appropriate for the local jurisdiction to hold

the current contractor hostage so the jurisdiction can get the building updated. The contractor is responsible for the new work for which he or she purchased the permit. If, upon inspection of the new work, the local jurisdiction finds that other existing work is a hazard or there is a question of legality, the local jurisdiction shall notify and deal with the building owner to correct the issues in question.

Q The installation instruction for one of our 80 percent furnaces cautions against providing combustion air from areas such as laundry rooms. The manufacturer states that installation of a furnace adjacent to laundry equipment can lead to premature corrosion from chemicals in laundry detergents. Would it be acceptable to draw combustion air from an open basement or garage, which by definition is not a confined space, even though laundry equipment is also located in that space?

A The unit must be installed according to manufacturer's specifications, but the code panel is in agreement that as long as it is not in a confined space and the area can provide adequate combustion air, the installation described above would not be an issue. The panel believes the intent of the manufacturer's caution statement is to address a small room specifically designated as a laundry room.

Q I had a mechanical contractor submit a design with a relief vent opening into the attic space through the non-rated ceiling with a "pressure damper." This relief vent was installed to relieve positive pressure associated with the running of the economizer. Can conditioned air be ex-

Continued . . .



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Fall Education
Institute

The Oregon Mechanical Officials Association is presenting its **2004 Fall Education Institute** September 15-17, at the Holiday Inn, in Wilsonville.

Call (503) 873-9389 for more information. ♦

hausted directly into the attic or must it be discharged directly outside and what code section would or would not allow this?

A This question deals with an economizer that creates a positive pressure within the occupied conditioned space. The relief vent is designed to relieve excess pressure directly into the attic. OSSC 1317.3.1 identifies the need for providing pressure relief, but does not specify a method or give us direction on how this shall be accomplished and the mechanical code is silent on this issue. The panel found no reason why this couldn't work, therefore, positive pressure in the conditioned space may be exhausted directly into the attic through a relief vent.

Q Insulation on ductwork in a residence: When running flex duct (i.e., Y's, boots, T's, or short pieces of hard pipe) Does the insulation have to be foil backed or have any kind of vapor barrier?

A The Dwelling Specialty Code (ODSC) does not require duct insulation to be foil backed or to have any kind of vapor barrier when installed in unconditioned spaces. Proof that the duct insulation meets the R-8 requirement may be required. OSSC, Section 1308.1.1 requires a vapor barrier to be installed on supply and return ducts in spaces which are vented to the outside. Additionally the OSSC, Division III (Other buildings), Section 1317.7 requires duct-work conveying both heated and cooled air that is outside the insulated building envelope to have a vapor barrier having a perm rating not exceeding .05 perm. The requirements found in the OSSC cover all work not regulated by the ODSC.

Q When bidding a retrofit job to insulate existing ductwork, can raw insulation be used?

440-2733 (8/04/COM)

A Yes. Fiberglass blankets are commonly used for this purpose.

Q When a water heater is changed out from electric to gas, is a mechanical permit required? If so, is a mechanical permit pulled separately, as the plumbing is usually done under a minor label?

A Yes, a separate mechanical permit is required in addition to the plumbing minor label.

Q A commercial air compressor permitted under the boiler and pressure vessel law has a "condensate" line. Who regulates the point of disposal? If it's the mechanical inspector, would you allow it to go to the exterior to a planting area?

A There is nothing in the mechanical code that specifically regulates this type of condensate. The boiler code doesn't regulate this part of the pressure vessel, either. The condensate from an air compressor is different then the condensate from a mechanical unit. For example, it does not automatically drain, as a condensing unit would. Larger compressors are manually drained on a weekly basis and the amount of condensation is small compared to the amount dispensed by a mechanical unit. Also, the water is rusty due to corrosion in the pressure vessel. Typically, these tanks are blown-off weekly to an area designated by the owner of the building as an area not affected by staining from rusty water. This would be an area such as into a floor drain or to an outside rain drain. It would not be appropriate to blow off the condensate from a pressure vessel to a sidewalk or driveway or any area where the water might splash onto someone or cause rust damage. There is no physical danger from this type of condensate, so disposing of it in a flower bed or landscaped area is fine. ♦

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