



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.

Tri-County Service Center

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News *Connect*

A quarterly newsletter for mechanical contractors

January-March 2004

PHCC to sponsor January 22 forum

The Oregon Association of Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling Contractors is sponsoring a free forum on mechanical-code issues, 4-7 p.m., Thursday, January 22, at the Multnomah County Board Room, 501 SE Hawthorne, Portland.

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

The forum's purpose 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:

- Mercury disposal law
- Questions and answers
- Update on state mechanical board

Dec. 3 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 the local building official 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.

Q Does the reference to "circulating air duct" in C404.1 in the 2002 Oregon Mechanical Specialty Code include above-ceiling return-air plenums? We have been told yes by one jurisdiction and no by another.

A No. Plenums, by definition, are air compartments or chambers to which one or more ducts are connected. Although plenums are not considered circulating air ducts, they are part of the duct system. See *State of Oregon Interpretation C404.1*.

Q Is it legal to route gas piping through an accessible ceiling return plenum?

A. Yes. See *Statewide Interpretation No. C404.1*. You can download or view it on www.oregonbcd.org. Click on *Interpretations*, then *Mechanical*.

Q Please give the definition of the words *should* and *shall* as they pertain to installation instructions for furnace installs. Example: The manufacturer's installation instructions state

that the condensate drain *should* be installed with provisions to prevent winter freeze up.

A In this example, *should* means the manufacturer has recommended it. *Shall* is used in laws, regulations, or directives to express that which is mandatory.

Q Section 606.2.1 of the Oregon Mechanical Specialty Code states in part: "smoke detectors shall be installed in the return air duct or plenum upstream of any filter, exhaust air connection, outdoor air connection, or decontamination equipment." Some return air grills have a changeable fabric filter for easy maintenance. Does Section 606.2.1 apply to these filters? If it does, where would we install the smoke detector?

A No, this code section would not apply to a filter located at the return air grill.

Q Section 606.4.1, #2, requires a duct smoke detector to activate a visible and audible signal at an approved location. The installation is a push/pull in an existing commercial building that did not have any signal prior to the change-out. The building does not have a fire alarm system. Would such an installation require a visible and audible signal?

A No, the change-out of an existing unit would not require bringing the entire mechanical system up to current code. Section 102.4 in the Oregon Mechanical Specialty Code states: "Additions, alterations, renovations or repairs to a mechanical

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Mark your calendars
for 2004 mechanical
code forums:

January 22

April 22

September 23

December 14

Forums are 4-7 p.m.,
Thursdays, except
Tuesday, December 14,
in the Board Room of
the Multnomah Bldg.,
501 SE Hawthorne St.,
Portland.

system shall conform to that required for a new mechanical system without requiring the existing mechanical system to comply with all of the requirements of this code. Additions, alterations or repairs shall not cause an existing mechanical system to become unsafe, hazardous or overloaded.

Minor additions, alterations, renovations and repairs to existing mechanical systems shall meet the provisions for new construction, unless such work is done in the same manner and arrangement as was in the existing system, is not hazardous and is approved.”

Q Is a protective post required in a garage for an electric water heater or furnace?

A Yes. The installation of water heaters, whether electric or fuel-fired, is a plumbing installation and therefore is regulated under the plumbing section of the *Dwelling Specialty Code*. For specific code requirements on water-heater protection, see Section P2810.3. For additional information on fuel-fired appliances, see Section M1307.3.1 and Figure M1307.2.

Q Is a barrier required if an air conditioner is added to a furnace and the furnace is not protected?

A No. The *Dwelling Specialty Code*, Section 1202.1 allows for additions to existing mechanical systems without the contractor having to bring the entire system up to current code.

Q Section G2419 Gas Shutoff Valves: Can a gas meter shut-off valve be the piping system shut-off, or does the code require both?

A The meter valve addressed in Section G2419.2 is the utility supplier's valve, and cannot be used as

a substitution for the other valves required in sections G2419.3, G2419.4, and G2419.5. The code does not require a generic piping system shut-off on the house side of the meter, except for the common system identified in Section G2419.3.

Q Where would a typical piping shut-off be located?

A The *Dwelling Specialty Code*, Section G2419.3, requires a shut-off valve installed outdoors at each building in a common system serving more than one building. Section G2419.4 requires a listed shut-off valve installed immediately before each MP regulator and Section G2419.5 requires that each appliance have a shut-off valve.

Q Combustion air: Is a single opening allowed under section M1703.3 and figure M1703.3(1) when manufacturer's installation instructions require a high and low opening? It seems that maybe the code is ahead of the installation instructions.

A Refer to M1307.1 and R102.1. A single opening would be allowed, as long as the manufacturer's listing or warranty is not violated.

Q Do we have to replace the old-fashioned gas valve when changing out a furnace or adding a new appliance?

A There is no code requirement to replace the existing gas valve. Refer to Section M102.4.

Q Do you need red, yellow, or blue handles on a gas valve?

A There is no code requirement to use colored handles on gas valves. ♦

440-2733 (1/04/COM)

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