



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

March-June 2005

PHCC to sponsor Thursday, March 24 forum

The Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors Association will sponsor a free forum on mechanical code issues, 4-7 p.m. Thursday, March 24, 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 of master-builder continuing-education credit, or three hours of home-inspector credit from CCB.

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.

Contractors and building-department personnel may send questions for the code panel to **Christie L.Triplett@state.or.us** or fax them to the center, (503) 872-6735.

Agenda:

The Building Codes Division's mechanical code expert, Mike Ewert, will address:

- Waterheaters
 - Platform requirements
 - Permit requirements
- Plastic gas piping
 - Under slab requirements
- Insulation in plenums
- New code requirements
- Attendees' questions

December 14 code forum Q & A

If you work in a jurisdiction outside of the tri-county region, please contact your local building officials for inspection standards.

New duct insulations discussed

Monty Millspaugh and Steve Ray of Reflectix talked about the company's new cotton and aluminum duct insulation. They answered questions from the panel and audience. For more information, visit www.reflectixinc.com/company/.

Forum Q & A

Q Section M1403.2 of the *Dwelling Code* indicates heat pumps shall be installed 3 inches minimum above grade to permit free drainage of defrost water. Section M1413.1 indicates evaporative coolers shall be installed on a level platform or base not less than 3 inches above adjoining ground. Regarding outdoor units on split system air-conditioning installation, are 3 inches required if the unit is sitting on a patio or driveway?

A Sections M1403.2 and M1413.1 specify requirements for heat pumps and evaporative coolers, but do not address exterior mounting of an air-conditioning unit. The tri-county mechanical forum panel agree that a sloped patio or driveway meets the intent of the code, which is to provide adequate protection from corrosion and the damaging effects of collecting water. Unless required by the manufacturer in its installation instructions, an additional raised

pad is not necessary. Leveling of the unit can be accomplished with mounting pads or factory-installed leveling devices.

Q What is the maximum length of non-pressure-tested gas piping allowed in a repair or addition? Must all repaired or added pipe be in the same room and not pass through walls or floors, etc.?

A Section G2416.1.2 requires that all repairs and additions be tested, but allows local jurisdictions to approve alternate methods of testing.

Alternate methods of testing typically involve soap-testing the joints or using an electronic gas sniffer. Historically, these alternate methods have been allowed for piping additions of six feet or less (including the addition of two fittings), but the exception in G2416.1.2 allows the local jurisdiction extra latitude to extend that length (and number of fittings) when deemed appropriate. Minor repair of existing piping systems (less than six feet long, including the replacement of two fittings) was allowed without a permit. Although this unwritten standard would only apply to repair work, most jurisdictions consider this common practice, and the panel agreed.

Although a pressure test may not be required, and inspection may not be warranted, an alternate leak-detecting method must be used, whether existing piping is being repaired or piping is being added to an existing system.

Continued . . .



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Please join us for the 2005 mechanical code forums

Wednesdays, 4-7 p.m.

June 15

September 14

Multnomah County
Board Room
501 SE Hawthorne

If you have questions
for the code panel, e-
mail them to [Christie.
Ltriplett@state.or.us](mailto:Christie.Ltriplett@state.or.us).

Without question, an addition or alteration to an existing gas system requires a permit and inspection. Check with your local jurisdiction for its policy on minor repair work.

As far as whether or not repairs or additional piping must be in the same room, the panel agreed that passing of piping through walls or floors is acceptable as it relates to testing alternatives.

Q Can we get clarification on the PVC primer coloration issue? We use PVC piping for most of our venting needs, and some jurisdictions allow us to use clear primer, but others say it must be purple. The dwelling code does not specify a color and the OMSC (Section 801.20) states: "The primer shall be a contrasting color." The plumbing code requires the primer for all PVC installations to be purple. What's the answer?

A Use a contrasting color for the primer. If you have concerns or have another product or primer that you wish to use, consult your local building department first. And always follow the venting requirements of the appliance manufacturer.

Q What is the intent of the phrase "where damage to any building component will occur," found in Section 307.2.3? In this case, cooling coil is being installed above an office. The unit will be exposed, because no ceiling is being installed. If the floor is carpeted, do the provisions of Section 307.2.3 apply? What if the flooring is vinyl? Wood? Concrete? Does the code consider situations in which portable computers or computer servers are installed under such equipment?

A An auxiliary drain pan or a secondary drain is required for locations where condensate overflow could damage a building or its contents. The auxiliary drain pan or secondary drain catches condensate spilling from the primary drain, which protects the building from structural and finish damage.

Q Some cooling equipment comes with an internal drain pan installed in the unit that has a main drain and an overflow outlet. Does such equipment comply with Section 307.2.3, item 1, which requires an overflow pan not less than three inches larger than the unit?

A No, your scenario would not meet the requirements specified in item 1 of Section 307.2.3 (Dwelling Code, Section M14511.3.1). But, Section 307.2.3 (M14511.3.1) offers three options for providing an auxiliary drain pan or secondary drain system, and it appears your scenario fits under item 2.

Item 2: A separate overflow drain line shall be connected to the drain pan provided with the equipment. Such overflow drain shall discharge to a conspicuous point of disposal to alert occupants in the event of a stoppage of the primary drain. The overflow drain line shall connect to the drain pan at a higher level than the primary drain connection.

Q If a condensate pump is not protected by an overflow pan, is a secondary float switch required in the pump? If the pump is equipped with an overflow switch, does it comply with the intent of this section without the protection of an overflow pan?

A The code does not require an overflow pan for a condensate pump or a secondary float switch, but if a pump had an overflow switch, it would comply with the intent of the code.

Q Can an installer use an uninsulated supply and return duct in a garage under concrete?

A No. The underground duct has to be properly installed and must be insulated. Insulation must be approved for below-grade use. Underground ducts shall be installed in accordance with Section 603.8, of the OMSC (Section M1601.1.2 in the Dwelling Code).

440-2733 (3/05/COM)

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