TRI-COUNTY SERVICE CENTER

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A quarterly newsletter for mechanical contractors

November 2003-January 2004

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.

AIREFCO to sponsor December 3 forum

AIREFCO is sponsoring a free forum on mechanical-code issues, 4-7 p.m., Wednesday, December 3, 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 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:

- Anti-tipping devices on cooking appliances
- Duct tape revisited
- New interpretation concerning gas piping installed within a plenum.

September 17 code-forum questions & 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."

At the forum, Andrea Simmons, BCD's Policy and Technical Services manager, distributed a legislative summary and a copy of SB 906 that, among other things, calls for the establishment of a state mechanical board. More information may be found on line at www.oregonbcd.org. Click on "BCD Legislative Summary" on the home page to learn about individual bills affecting the industry.

Q We are installing polyethylene natural-gas piping that is engineered and certified for underground installations. The piping will be installed under an asphalt driveway. Section G2414.14.1 states: "Plastic pipe shall not be used within or under any building or slab ..." Is an asphalt-covered driveway considered a "slab"?

A No, the International Residential Code Commentary specifies that only concrete is considered a slab.

Q May a piece of poly pipe installed under a sidewalk behind the right-of-way be installed with a conduit and venting or sleeve and venting?

A Yes, up to a maximum width of five feet.

Q Section 1108 refers to a required refrigerant-piping pressure test for refrigeration systems. Is this test required on commercial refrigeration and air conditioning units or just refrigeration units (walk-in coolers, cold warehouses, and the like)?

A Yes, each refrigerant-containing part of every system that is constructed on the premises, except compressors, condensers, vessels, evaporators, safety devices, pressure gauges and control mechanisms that are listed and factory tested, shall be tested and proved tight after complete installation and before operation.

Q Is hydronic piping defined as a heating water system?

A Neither the Oregon Mechanical Specialty Code (OMSC) nor the Oregon Dwelling Specialty Code (ODSC) define "hydronic piping." The dictionary defines "hydronic" as a system of heating or cooling that involves the transfer of heat by circulating fluid in a closed system of pipes.

Q Does hydronic piping need to be separated from the domestic water system via a backflow preventer?

Continued ...

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER & BUSINESS SERVICES

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A Yes and no. This is a complicated subject, with many variables. The simple answer is there are two basic types of systems to which your question could relate. One system is considered a "closed system," and the other type of system is an "open system." A "closed system" is a heating system closed off from the environment; its heating fluidis not changed except during maintenance. An "open system" is a system in which the heating fluid is replaced often. The OMSC and Chapter 21 in the ODSC pertain to and regulate "closed systems." The potable water supply requires separation and protection from the "closed system," which could be accomplished by using a double-wall heat exchanger or a back-flow preventer. The "open system" is regulated by the Oregon Plumbing Specialty Code (OPSC).

Q If there is no backflow preventer and the heating system is direct-connected to the domestic system, is the hydronic piping no longer hydronic piping?

A An "open system" is still considered a hydronic piping system, but is regulated under the plumbing code, because it uses domestic potable water as its heating medium.

Q Does the hydronic heating-water system need to comply with the mechanical code under this piping arrangement?

A "Closed systems" are regulated under the OMSC and the ODSC. If a system uses potable hot water for both domestic and heating purposes (open system), it is regulated under the OPSC.

Q Unlisted duct tape has been installed on the metal-to-metal and flex-to-metal air-duct joints of a furnace installation in a single-family dwelling. Are we required to remove unlisted duct tape before installing approved tape or mastic?

A No, approved tape may be installed over unlisted duct tape, with a half-inch overlap.

Q Where metal tape with butyl rubber adhesive listed to UL 181B-FX is used to seal S-lock and drive clips at metal duct connections, is there a minimum lap required beyond the joint or seam?

A Yes, half an inch.

Q Several code changes to the Oregon Dwelling Specialty Code have a direct effect on the HVAC industry. One of these cleans up the conflict in Section M1601.3.1 dealing with sealing duct joints. Is it acceptable for jurisdictions to implement this change early under Section R104.11: Alternative materials, design and methods of construction equipment?

A The code change to Section M1601.3.1 clarifies the intent of the original code language submitted by the Office of Energy. It's in line with real-world application and installation instructions provided by the product manufacturer. It will provide the results desired by the Office of Energy; therefore, an alternative material or method for duct sealing may be approved when the building official finds that the proposed material or method complies with the intent of the provisions of this code.

Q Is it acceptable to size gas fuel piping using the sizing tables in the 2000 edition of the Oregon Dwelling Specialty Code?

A Yes.

For a full text of the September 17th mechanical code forum see www.oregonbcd.org. Click on "Code Programs," then "Mechanical," then Tri-County Code Forum Q and A.

440-2733 (11/03/COM)

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Mark your calendars!

2004 mechanical-code forums:

- **January 22**
- **April 22**
- **September 23**
- **December 14***

Forums are 4-7 p.m., Thursdays.

Board Room of the Multnomah Building, 501 SE Hawthorne St. Portland.

*** Tuesday**

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