



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 *flash*

A bi-monthly newsletter for electricians and electrical contractors

Jan./Feb./Mar. 2002

Code forum slated February 7

Have you ever had a simple installation pass inspection in one jurisdiction, only to find that the same installation made in a different jurisdiction failed? If so, you are not alone. Many contractors have complained to their industry associations, to the Building Codes Division, and to their local jurisdictions that inspection results are inconsistent from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

You have the opportunity to change that trend!

The Building Codes Division's Tri-County Service Center and industry and local government representatives are conducting a series of code forums to put an end to inconsistent code calls in the tri-county area. Local building departments have

committed to following the guidance provided by the forums. This effort can succeed only with your help. Come to the code forums and participate in the discussions. Add your questions to the agenda, instead of wasting time and money revamping your installations.

The forum, sponsored by NECA, will be Thursday, February 7, 4-7 p.m., at the State Office Building, 800 NE Oregon Street, Portland. You can e-mail your questions to the tri-county office: Joanie.M.Stevens-Schwenger@state.or.us, or call the office at (503) 872-6731. Three hours of AIA HSW credits are available to qualifying attendees. ▲

Update on arc-fault protectors

Under 1999 NEC Section 210-12, the scheduled implementation of arc-fault circuit interrupters is effective January 1, 2002. However, the **Electrical and Elevator Board postponed implementation and enforcement of arc-fault circuit interrupter requirements until after March 31, 2002**, and recommended collaboration with the Building Code Structures Board on a new effective date.

The new rules will not be enforced until both boards coordinate the implementation of the NEC 2002 arc-fault protector requirements in Oregon.

Before March 31, BCD will post a technical advisory to the Division Web site, www.oregonbcd.org, regarding interpretation and implementation. ▲

Code Forum Q and A

The following includes questions and answers discussed at the November 15 code forum.

Q In a commercial structure, for example a high-tech facility, can one install receptacles under the floor, or must they be above the floor?

A If the room meets the requirements of NFPA 75, even if the room is technically not a "computer room," then receptacles may be installed beneath the floor.

Q OAR 918-309-0400 states that residential restricted-energy permits can be taken out by the property owner. The problem arises when a person states he is the owner of the building, when the general contractor who is building the home, is technically the owner. Most jurisdictions say that they take the applicant's word of ownership. In my jurisdiction we require the person or firm identified as the owner on the application to take out the permit.

A OAR 918-309-0400 is clear: Only a property owner may take out a permit to make an installation on his or her property. Some panel members expressed the concern that applicants in the process of closing could not get a permit for a simple stereo installation. However, the panel agreed that jurisdictions should issue restricted-energy permits only to contractors or

homeowners. The Service Center will forward this concern to the Electrical Board Standing Committee.

Q An electrical connection is installed with a minor label or in an installation in which no electrical permit was required. Can a mechanical inspector require a bonding jumper on the new installation or extension of a gas piping system?

A No. Only an electrical inspector has authority to require changes under the electrical code. The mechanical inspector may require only that which is necessary under the mechanical code.

Q Is it permissible to install a bonding jumper from a gas appliance to the supply side of the appliance gas shutoff valve when the equipment grounding conductor for the circuit supplying the appliance is "sufficient in size" by being the largest circuit that may energize the piping system?

A Yes.

Q What conditions does "may energize the piping system" refer to? Proximity to electrical conductors, appliances, and connections?

A All of the above.

Q A meter main sub-panel installation: May a person bond to the water pipe from the sub-panel?



News flash

Minor labels can be used for minor commercial and residential installations. Check our Web site for the scope of work and application materials: www.oregonbcd.org/tricounty/htm. Click on "Minor Label Program."

A Yes, for equipment ground-bonding purposes, but not for the grounding electrode conductor required at the service disconnect.

Q Which permit would an alarm system company use to install a low-voltage security system in a one- or two-family dwelling, and which would we use for a commercial site?

A A contractor must pull a full permit for a complete system. Minor labels may be used in either residential or commercial installations of this nature only if the work falls under the scope of work defined in the minor label rules, OAR 918-309-0220.

Q I know our company is responsible for calling the inspection, but what if the property owner will not cooperate? This happens every day.

A If the property owner refuses an inspection, contact the local jurisdiction for assistance, and let the jurisdiction know that you have made the effort to arrange for the inspection. In such cases, the contractor has fulfilled the obligation to attempt to arrange the inspection, but he or she needs to alert the jurisdiction to the problem with the homeowner.

Q Will the state ever design a system for permits that resembles the minor label program to eliminate inconsistencies in pricing and procedures?

A Such a system change is not anticipated.

Q Here's the installation: a kitchen outlet layout with a corner sink and windows flush with the counter top, and the first outlet 30 inches on each side. What would the code panel accept in such a situation: Appeal? Accept? Alternative?

A Alternative. Compliance with the code would require 24 inches. However, under NEC 90-4, the jurisdictions may consider the *safety risks* of deviation from absolute code compliance. Inspectors should "use common sense" in approvals on a case-by-case basis. If strict adherence to code is mandated, appeal may be made to the jurisdiction.

Q I would like to know how many inspections are allowed for each electrical permit. I was informed by one jurisdiction that only two inspections are allowed on a permit.

A See OAR 918-309-0030 through 0070 (as amended, effective 10-10-01 for fee increases), that specifies the number of allowable inspections for each *subcategory* of permit.

The following are clarifications of issues addressed at the June 19 code forum. These answers will be posted to the Web site to replace current postings.

Q What is the difference between a required signaling circuit and a non-required signaling circuit?

A A required signaling circuit is one that is required by a fire-and-life-safety code or standard. A non-required signaling circuit is one that is not required by any fire-and-life-safety code.

Q Can recessed cans be installed with a minor label?

A Yes. The only limitation is under OAR 918-309-0210(3)(a): "A minor label may be used on a job site with existing structural or electrical permits provided the work is of the type covered by the minor label rules and is done by a contractor licensed under ORS 479.630 who does not have an existing electrical permit for that job site." The recessed can lights can be installed in new construction as well as remodels. The limitation refers to one new circuit or extension of two or more circuits. Nothing in the rule prohibits the wiring from being covered.

Q Under "repair of service" can a minor label be used to replace a panel, meter base, stack, or service feeder wire?

A No, see OAR 918-309-0220. The rule is specific: "Repair or replace *damaged components* of existing electrical equipment including services not to exceed 200 amps." A component would be one element, i.e., meter jaw, meter base hub, damaged conductor needing to be re-terminated, replace main breaker, replace buss, etc. ▲

440-2725 (1/02/COM)