



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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Forum participants now receive continuing-ed credit

The Plumbing and Heating and Cooling Contractors Association and the Tri-County Service Center are sponsoring the next plumbing code forum. The meeting takes place Thursday, April 25, 4-7 p.m., at the Sunnybrook Service Center, 9101 S.E. Sunnybrook Boulevard in Clackamas. Area plumbers, plumbing contractors and inspectors are invited to this free event. Licensees are eligible for three credits of code-related continuing-education credit from BCD, and AIA members may earn three HSW credits for attending.

The purpose of the forums is to reach consensus on code applications throughout the region. Forum organizers welcome questions and en-

courage contractors and building departments to submit questions to the center in advance of the forum.

April 25 Agenda

- Update on statewide code interpretations and process: Terry Swisher, state code chief.
- Q & A sample questions:
 - Is the replacement of an existing, leaking, gas hot-water heater that is not a conversion covered under the plumbing minor label program?
 - Is the installation of plastic pipe allowed in non-combustible (Types I and II) construction?
 - Can plastic pipe be used in non-rated shafts and chases? ●

January 24 Plumbing Code Forum Q and A

Tri-county building departments have agreed to use the code panel's determinations for inspection standards. Contractors or building department personnel may submit questions to the code panel by sending e-mail to Joanie.M.Stevens-Schwenger@state.or.us or a fax to the center, (503) 872-6735.

Background: In December 2000, with clarification in March 2001, BCD issued an inter-office memo on replacement water heaters. Section 117.2 exempts replacement water heaters from complying with several items except the requirement to have pilots, burners, or heating elements and switches 18 inches above floor level when installed in a garage.

Split-level houses constructed from 1977 to 1979 have electric water heaters in the garage on the floor (standard practice at the time) against an interior wall next to the electric furnace. Soffits extend six feet in all directions about 20 inches above the water heaters.

To raise the heaters 18 inches, they would have to be moved at least six feet. This would require replumbing the units and extending the electrical circuit, which would exceed the cost of the water heater.

Q The question for the forum: Must these units be elevated regardless of the cost and inconvenience?

A Section 117.2 clearly requires all water heaters to be installed so that the *point of ignition* is at least 18 inches above the floor.

Q ABS and PVC DWV pipe normally has warps or bends. In ground installation, should the warp or bend be pointed up, down, or to the side?

A The warp should be to the side in order to support the length of the pipe and to maintain a uniform grade.

Q What type of backflow device is needed on a hot-water or steam-boiler feed line (geared for dedicated heating)?

A A reduced-pressure double-check valve (RP device) assembly is the only choice.

Q What type of device is needed on a steam boiler with a non-pressurized open-to-the-atmosphere boiler-feed pump tank with a float-operated valve to let water into the tank?

A An air gap meets the requirement for systems that are open to the atmosphere.



News Splash

BCD's message
to homeowners –
"Permits protect
the safety and
value of your
home."

Our message to
contractors –
Refuse to work
without a permit!



Q What type of device is needed for a closed hot-water heating system with all potable materials?

A When the system is closed (isolated from the potable system but still connected through a water supply line) an RP device is required.

Q What device is required for systems using non-listed material?

A An RP device.

Q Is there a difference in RP devices between one- and two-family dwellings and commercial buildings?

A No.

Q Can a minor-label permit be issued for the relocation of one sink if standard permits have been issued for electrical and structural?

A Yes, if the installation meets the criteria for minor labels.

Q If a contractor had a minor label for water-heater replacement, then the entire water system for the house was re-piped, does the contractor need a full permit to cover the water-heater installation?

A No, because the work began with the water-heater replacement, a minor label covers that work. Later, if the customer adds to the scope of work, it is necessary to pull a permit appropriate to cover the additional work. In this case, the plumber must pull a full permit to cover replumbing the house, but the minor label covers the water heater replacement.

Q Does the water heater need to be installed to current code? Would I be required to add seismic strapping?

440-2727 (3/02/COM)

A Section 117.2 of the one- and two-family dwelling code has specific exemptions for water heater installations. Briefly described, the section exempts like-for-like installations from meeting current code requirements for new construction with a couple of exceptions (for example, the point of ignition must be raised 18 inches above the floor). Therefore, meeting current code requirements for seismic strapping, water pipe sizing and relief valve termination is not required. For new construction and commercial water heater installations, the installation must meet current code requirements.

Q The customer wants to move the water heater five feet. Can I still use a minor label?

A Yes, but the installation must comply with all the limitations of the minor label requirements.

Q Are drip pans required for all water heater installations?

A No, drip pans are not required by code, *except in furred spaces.*

Q What kind of material can you use for backfill when bedding a water service?

A Backfill material can consist of clean fill dirt, sand or ¾-minus crushed rock.

Q Do the same minor label rules apply for commercial as well as for residential when using plumbing minor labels?

A Yes, as long the installation is done according to code. Note: The exemptions for like-for-like water heater replacements apply only to the replacement of water heaters in one- and two-family dwellings. For commercial water heater installations, the installation must be done to current code standards. ●