

**Oregon  
Alternative Method Ruling No. 93-90  
2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-INCH-THICK MASONRY WALL PROTECTION**

**Requested By:** PPPI MANUAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

**QUESTION**

Are 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-inch-thick masonry blocks acceptable as an approved material to reduce clearances specified by Table 5-A in the Oregon Mechanical Specialty Code (OMSC)?

**APPLICABLE CODE SECTIONS**

1993 Oregon Mechanical Specialty Code (OMSC), Tables 5-A, 5-B(j).

**BACKGROUND**

Table 5-A of the OMSC specifies standard installation clearances for unlisted heat-producing appliances. Table 5-B of the OMSC specifies reduced clearances when specified types of protection are used, frequently adjacent to the wall behind the appliances. Although several types of noncombustible materials are listed in Table 5-B, there is no mention of masonry blocks. Item(j) of Table 5-B provides that if prefabricated brick 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches thick is spaced out one inch from combustible material and ventilated, the clearances shown in Table 5-A may be reduced. Of the various noncombustible materials listed in Table 5-B, prefabricated brick 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches thick is the closest in composition and performance to 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-inch-thick masonry blocks.

**FINDINGS**

This interpretation is authorized by ORS 455.060, Rulings on Acceptability of Materials, Designs or Methods of Construction and Attorney General's Opinion OP-5208 issued October 1, 1981, which advised the statute permits authoritative interpretations of existing code requirements.

Solid masonry blocks 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches thick provide equivalent protection to 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-inch brick.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The use of 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-inch-thick solid masonry blocks is an acceptable alternate to 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-inch-thick prefabricated brick, and may be substituted therefore in Item (j) of Table 5-B of the OMSC, provided consideration is given to added floor loading, if required by the weight of the blocks.

Interpretive Ruling 93-90 replaces PPPI-4114.

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(signed January 26, 1994)  
John Talbott, Chairman  
Structural Code Advisory Board

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Date

The recommendations and findings of the Structural Code Advisory Board are accepted and the conclusions are adopted.

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(signed January 26, 1994)  
Gary J. Wicks, Administrator  
Building Codes Division

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Date