



A quarterly newsletter for homebuilders and contractors

January-March 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.

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The Home Builders Association to sponsor Jan. 28 code forum

The Home Builders Association is sponsoring a free forum on one- and two-family structural code issues, 4-7 p.m., Wednesday, January 28, at a new location: the Multnomah Board Room in the Multnomah Building, 501 SE Hawthorne, Portland. Qualified participants may receive three hours of code-related credit from BCD, three hours of HSW credit from AIA or a certificate for

three HSW hours, or three hours of home-inspector continuing-education credit from CCB.

The purpose of the forum is to discuss regional code applications and reach consensus on standards for the tri-county region. All area contractors, remodelers, architects, and building-department personnel are invited.

Nov. 12 code forum questions and answers

Local building officials have agreed to use the code panels determinations for inspection standards in the tri-county region. If you are working in a jurisdiction beyond the tri-county boundaries, please check with your jurisdiction for its standards. Contractors and building-department personnel may submit questions to the code forum by sending e-mail to joanie.m.stevens-schwenger@state.or.us or faxing questions 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.

not allow passage of a sphere five inches in diameter. The exception also allows the triangular openings formed by the riser, tread, and bottom rail of a guard at the open side of a stairway to be sized to prevent passage of a sphere six inches in diameter.

Q What are the height requirements for guardrails?

A The ODSC, Section R316.1 states: "Porches, balconies or raised floor surfaces located more than 30 inches above the floor or grade below shall have guards not less than 36 inches in height. Open sides of stairs with a total rise of more than 30 inches above the floor or grade below shall have guards not less than 34 inches in height measured vertically from the nosing of the treads."

Q The Oregon Dwelling Specialty Code (ODSC) talks about having a maximum spacing of four inches between intermediate rails or ornamental closures on guardrails, but some jurisdictions have allowed up to five inches for the ornamental portion of the balusters. Is the additional width allowable?

Q ODSC, Section R403.1.4 requires vertical rebar spaced four feet on center when a construction joint is created between a footing and stem wall. Do these vertical bars need to be tied in place prior to pouring the footings? Or can they be wet-set?

A Section 316.2 requires guards on raised floor areas, balconies, and porches to have intermediate rails or ornamental closures that do not allow passage of a sphere four inches in diameter. The accompanying exception in Section 316.2 allows guards on the open sides of stairways to have intermediate rails or ornamental closures that do

A After a lively discussion, the panel agreed to submit this question to the BCD staff for further review.

Continued...



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News Site

Mark your calendars

2004 one-and two-family code forum schedule:

- Jan. 28
- April 28
- Sept. 15
- Dec. 15

Forums are 4-7 p.m. Wednesdays, in the Board Room of the Multnomah Building, 501 S.E. Hawthorne St., Portland. ♦

Q ODSC, Section R802.10.3, which deals with bracing of trusses: How consistently is this section being enforced from jurisdiction to jurisdiction?

A The committee was uncertain about how consistently this code section is enforced, but encourages all jurisdictions to follow the truss manufacturer’s installation guidelines and to refer to TPI/HIB handbook when there are no such guidelines. The same applies to bracing gable end trusses.

Q ODSC, Section R301.1.1 states: “The requirements of this code are based on platform and balloon-frame construction.” We have several instances in which “scissor” trusses have been used and a standard gable end truss was placed at the end wall, creating a “knuckle” in the wall. This does not appear to meet the balloon or platform prescriptive requirements of the code. Should the end wall be framed continuously to the roof diaphragm? Would a design be required if full-height wall studs were not desired?

A This question requires an interpretation and will be submitted to the BCD staff.

Q What is the definition of a bedroom as it pertains to smoke detectors and egress windows? Section R310.1 states in part: “every sleeping room shall have at least one openable emergency escape and rescue window.” Some jurisdictions

believe that because you can sleep in any room, egress windows must be installed. This leads to the discussion of what can or should be classified as a bedroom for the purpose of calculation of local system development charges (SDCs).

A It is not uncommon for someone to submit a set of plans that has an extra room designated as a den, office, weight room, library, etc. The primary use for these rooms is not intended to be sleeping. However, some contractors or homeowners designate a room as a den or office to circumvent local SDCs or the original owner may use the room as it was designated on the plans, but the next owners use the room as a bedroom. Because the cost of smoke detection and appropriate egress windows is small compared to the cost of a human life, it may be best in some cases for local jurisdictions to require these safety provisions and to give the homeowner or contractor the benefit of doubt on how the room is named on the plan submitted for the purposes of the SDCs. However, it is inappropriate for a jurisdiction to tell a homeowner or contractor how each room of their home will be used or classified. It is often obvious that the room in question is not a bedroom, e.g., a door leads to the outside to be used as an office entrance, there is a wall of shelving for library use, there are special provisions for exercise equipment, etc. These rooms need to be treated as they are designated on the plans, without speculation about future use. ♦

440-2737 (1/04/COM)

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