

# TRI-COUNTY SERVICE CENTER



## 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 *Line*

A quarterly newsletter for commercial builders

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## Building code forum set for December 17

The fall quarter tri-county building code forum on commercial structural issues will be Monday, Dec. 17, 4-7 p.m., at the Home Builders Association Building, 15555 S.W. Bangy Road, in Lake Oswego. The event is open to all contractors, architects, engineers, inspectors, plan reviewers, and anyone interested in commercial structural code issues. Those who have questions to add to the agenda should send

them by e-mail, Joanie.M.Stevens-Schwenger@state.or.us, or fax, (503) 872-6735. You may also call, (503) 872-6731. The next forums will be March 21 and June 20, at the Home Builders Association Building. ♦

**Three hours of AIA and HSW continuing-education credit may be available.**

## Center provides free fire-stop seminar

The Tri-County Service Center, in conjunction with product manufacturers, is offering a series of seminars to facilitate consistent application of code in its region. Various manufacturers, representatives, or jurisdiction staff will present free training that focuses on new products, materials, and technology. The center will be presenting seminars on such topics as fire-stopping, proper applications of panels, lateral loads, shear walls, HVAC, and prescriptive bracing. The center welcomes topic suggestions from industry and local jurisdictions.

The first seminar is **Basic Firestop**, presented by *Firestop Specialty Systems*

Dec. 5 ..... Troutdale Council Chambers, 7-9 a.m.  
Dec. 12 ..... Oregon City Fire Station, 8-10 a.m.  
Jan. 16 ..... Hillsboro Public Svcs. Bldg. Auditorium  
8-10 a.m.

The Troutdale council chambers are at 104 S.E. Kibling Street. Refreshments will be served. The purpose of the class is to provide a comprehensive overview of fire-stop systems in the context of life-safety and code requirements. The seminar also deals with containment issues, and instructors will provide systems-installation examples. Continuing-education credit (code-related) for jurisdiction personnel may be approved by Dave Traxler, building official.

Space is limited, so please pre-register. Send e-mail to Bob.E.Brown@state.or.us, or call, (503) 872-6731. You can print registration forms from the tri-county pages of the Building Codes Division Web site, [www.oregonbcd.org/tricounty](http://www.oregonbcd.org/tricounty) and fax them to (503) 872-6735. ♦

## Sept. 6 forum questions and answers

**The following is a sample of questions addressed at the September forum. The building officials of all tri-county jurisdictions have committed to following the guidance provided by the code panel's answers. For full-text answers, check the Web: [www.oregonbcd.org/forum\\_manual/commercial\\_structural\\_commercial\\_structural.htm](http://www.oregonbcd.org/forum_manual/commercial_structural_commercial_structural.htm).**

### Accessibility guidelines

**Q** Some jurisdictions have issued accessibility-requirement interpretations; others don't even review accessibility because they say it's a federal civil law. What should we be doing?

**A** Building officials, by ORS 447, are responsible for enforcing Chapter 11 of the code. All jurisdictions should provide accessibility guidelines for plan review and provide comments to the applicant during the plan-review process. Since Sept. 1, Tri-County jurisdictions have been required to use the commercial-application-checklist process, which

provides the opportunity for a pre-submittal meeting during which the jurisdiction can outline the accessibility requirements of the project.

### Drinking fountain requirements

**Q** Why are some jurisdictions waiving the drinking-fountain requirement in certain occupancies, when others don't?

**Background:** This issue is limited to R-1 occupancies. A contributing factor is the availability of alternate sources of liquid, e.g., beverage bars in senior facilities or continental-breakfast bars in motels.

**A** A drinking fountain is required in A and E occupancies at an approved location on each floor (OSSC 2903.2). The only exception is in a drinking or dining establishment. If there is a conference area with a lobby/foyer, there must be a drinking fountain installed to serve the conference area. A

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Clackamas  
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News *Line*

Help area building departments develop consistent inspection standards by sending your questions to the code panel.

E-mail: Joanie.M.Stevens-Schwenger@state.or.us  
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2002  
Building Code Forums  
March 21 ♦ June 20  
Home Builders  
Association Meeting Rm.

drinking fountain is not required in the drinking or dining establishment portion of the A occupancy. Portable or temporary facilities, such as water coolers or bottled water dispensers, are not acceptable as alternatives, as they can be easily removed or discontinued. Continental-breakfast bars and juice bars, which may or may not be open to the public all day, do not qualify as eating or drinking establishments; thus they do not eliminate the requirement for a drinking fountain.

**Q Fire dampers in non-rated ceilings. We are installing new furnaces and new ductwork in a church in which none of the ceilings are fire-rated. They should be fire-rated, but the church is over 50 years old. In most jurisdictions, because the ceiling is not rated, we would not have to put fire dampers in the registers that penetrate the ceiling because it would not add protection — a fire would just burn around the dampers. One jurisdiction is requiring us to put in fire dampers, reasoning that the ceiling should be fire-rated and so we have to put them in based on what should be. This does not seem consistent with other jurisdictions. On a recent job, we did not need to install fire dampers or even smoke/fire dampers in the hallways because the building already had a sprinkler system. Yet a half-mile away, in another jurisdiction, the fire marshal required that the church add fire dampers (not smoke/fire dampers) to all of the hallway ceiling registers. What is right? Referred from the Aug. 9, 2001, mechanical code forum.**

**A** When a fire-rated construction is penetrated, fire dampers are required. If the construction is not fire-rated, fire dampers are not necessary (713.11 & 711.4). In cases in which ceilings are not rated, smoke/fire dampers should not be required. In these cases, the plans examiner required fire dampers because the existing 50-year-old ceiling should be fire-rated by today's standards. It is important to note that

we cannot base code requirements on our wishes or what we feel *should be*.

Fire taping

**Q In one-hour-rated wood frame floor/ceiling or roof/ceiling assemblies, some jurisdictions require fire taping of the second (exposed) layer of gypsum board while others do not — which should it be?**

**Background:** This question assumes that the gypsum board will be concealed either by surface-applied materials or a suspended non-rated ceiling. It also assumes that the joints between the layers of gypsum board are staggered.

**A** There may be several approved assemblies that differ in their specific requirements. The builder needs to install according to the approved assembly prescribed by the approving agency.

Fire stopping

**Q Some jurisdictions allow fire-stopping methodology to be resolved in the field with a pre-installation meeting involving the affected parties. Other jurisdictions require fire-stopping details to be shown on the construction documents. Which is correct?**

**Background:** The question here is not whether fire-stopping is required. Nor is it whether the general parameters for fire-stopping should be laid out in the construction documents. Some jurisdictions recognize that specifications and details may not reflect actual job conditions or the supplier of the fire-stop material.

**A** Fire-stopping details need to be reviewed and agreed upon in advance and must follow the manufacturer's instructions. In tri-county, fire-stopping details can be a deferred-submittal item. The deferred-submittal process gives the architect or builder sufficient time to determine the appropriate product and to have it reviewed and approved nearer to the time of installation. ♦

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