



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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Plumbing Code forum slated July 26

The Tri-County Building Industries Service Board has initiated a series of code forums to facilitate the consistent application of code in the tri-county region. The first plumbing code forum, open to all plumbers, plumbing contractors, building officials, and inspection staffs is Thursday, July 26, 4 p.m.–7 p.m, at the Clackamas County Auditorium, 9101 Sunnybrook Boulevard in Clackamas. A panel of industry and building-department code experts will answer questions and set consistent inspection and installation standards. The forum panel is interested in hearing about inconsistent practices and

invites all participants to fax questions or observations before the meeting, (503) 872-6735. Contact Marion Peterson at the Tri-County Service Center, (503) 872-6731, if you plan to attend.

Directions: from southbound I-205: Take exit 14 (Sunnyside Road), turn right on Sunnyside, turn left at first signal onto 93rd Avenue, turn right at the first signal onto Sunnybrook, turn right into the Sunnybrook Service Center. From northbound I-205: Take Exit 13 (82nd/Milwaukie), turn right at the first signal onto Sunnybrook Blvd., turn left into the Sunnybrook Service Center. ●

Settling site-specific disputes

Have you ever failed an inspection and shrugged off disputing the findings because the appeals process is too complicated and lengthy?

Thanks to the Tri-County Building Industry Service Board, tri-county contractors have a new method of settling site-specific disputes. Tri-County's dispute-resolution process allows the contractor to dispute inspection findings to the building official. If the contractor and building official cannot come to an agreement, the contractor can ask for a "second opinion." Then the

building official, through the Tri-County Service Center, arranges a conference call with the contractor and on-call code experts from other jurisdictions and industry. The on-call group discusses the case, and the building official takes the group's second opinion into consideration when rendering a decision in writing for the contractor. Contractors not satisfied with this decision can appeal the decision to a local appeals board or directly to the state code chief through the "587" appeals process. ●

Water heater replacement in one- and two-family dwellings

Tri-County has received several calls asking about specific code requirements for like-for-like water heater replacement in one- and two-family dwellings under the minor plumbing label program. To create consistent statewide code enforcement, the Building Codes Division code chiefs have provided the following guidelines:

Q Can plumbing contractors using minor plumbing labels defer certain code requirements as a responsibility of the property owner for water heater replacements?

A No, Oregon Administrative Rule 918-780-0130(2)(a)(b), sets specific conditions for the minor plumbing installation program, requiring that only registered plumbing contractors make the installations and that contractors follow plumbing installation and product-certification provisions of the One- and Two-Family Dwelling Specialty Code (Dwelling Code).

Explanation and Clarifications

A plumbing contractor using a minor plumbing label in a one- or two-family dwelling must follow all requirements of the code, including Section 117.2. The 2000 Edition of the Dwelling Code, Section 117.2, contains a new administrative provision regarding replacement of water heaters that is also included as an Oregon amendment. Section 117.2 exempts replacement water heaters from complying with all the plumbing, mechanical, or electrical code provisions for new construction, provided the installation complies with the listing requirements of the appliance. There is only one exception: Water heaters installed in garages are required to be installed so the pilots, burners or heating elements, and switches are at least 18 inches above floor level.

The following items clarify the intent of Section

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News Splash

Plumbing minor labels may only be used in residential structures that fall under the one- and two-family dwelling code. Multi-family and apartments are considered commercial construction, and rowhouses are covered under OSSC and OPSC. Some jurisdictions may offer commercial or other minor labels for use under the provisions of OAR 918-100-0020. (Tri-County is considering offering commercial plumbing minor labels. More information in the next *News Splash*.)

117.2 for like-for-like water heater replacement when the original water heater was installed to code requirements applicable at installation:

Relief valve termination — Existing installation method is acceptable. However, if no piping is present, the termination must be piped to within at least 6-10 inches of the floor at the base of the water heater. Other acceptable termination locations: a drip pan, clothes washer standpipe, floor drain or similar receptor, or the exterior of the building.

Seismic strapping — The existing installation method is acceptable. If no strapping is present, the replacement water heater is exempt from meeting the new code provision for seismic strapping under section 117.2. **Note:** Although not required, seismic strapping is recommended.

Excessive building water pressure — Pressure-reducing valves are not required for a water heater replacement. If the water pressure exceeds 125 psi, the homeowner should be informed that the relief valve might leak. However, it is the property owner's option to install a pressure-reducing valve.

Water pipe sizing — Existing water-pipe sizing is acceptable. Sections 117.2 and 3410.10(3) allow existing sizing to remain.

Raising water heaters in garages — All replacement water heaters installed in garages must meet this provision. The exception to Section 117.2 requires replacement water heaters to meet the requirements of 1307.3 and 3310.1, which require water heaters generating a glow, spark, or flame capable of igniting flammable vapors to have pilots, burners or heating elements, and switches at least 18 inches above floor level.

Water heater drip pan — Water heater pans are not required for replacement water heaters.

Fuel-fired water-heater venting — Existing vent-pipe may remain in use if it meets the listing requirements of the new water heater. It must be free of cracks, gaps, perforations, or other damage or dete-

rioration that would allow the escape of combustion products, including gases, moisture, and creosote.

Combustion air for fuel-burning water heaters — When like-for-like fuel-burning water heaters are replaced, the existing combustion-air conditions need not be changed. Water heaters installed in confined spaces must have sufficient combustion air.

Electrical-wire connections for water heater replacements — Under the provisions of Section 117.2, existing non-grounded two-wire connections to electric water heaters may remain in use as long as the existing branch circuit is sufficient for the electrical rating of the water heater.

Thermal-expansion protection — Thermal-expansion protection is not required for replacement water heaters under the provisions of Section 117.2.

Fuel-gas (natural) piping drip leg (sediment trap) — Existing installation method is acceptable, with or without a sediment trap, unless required by the appliance listing.

Water-supply valve (full-flow type) — The existing cold-water supply valve may remain in use.

Vehicular protection — Addition of vehicular-protection barriers or posts is not required under the code provisions of Section 117.2 for replacement water heaters. ●

For further information or clarification, call one of the following Building Codes Division staff:

- Terry Swisher** (503) 373-7488
chief plumbing inspector
- Gary Wilson** (503) 373-7509
chief electrical inspector
- Mike Ewert** (503) 373-7529
code specialist
- Tom Phillips** (503) 378-4459
structural chief
- Peggy Collins** (503) 373-1258
state building official

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