

UNIFORMITY OF INSPECTIONS COMMITTEE
Association of Minnesota Building Officials

Thursday April 12th, 2018
Blaine City Hall
9:00 am

Minutes

1. **Attic hatches and doors.** R402.2.4 states in part; “Attic doors from conditioned spaces to unconditioned spaces shall be weather-stripped and insulated to a level equivalent to the insulation on the surrounding surfaces.”

To what degree is this provision being met, and is this typically site built, or does it incorporate a separate pre-built component?

It is likely that the same practices are happening that were common before the last Energy Code change unless specifically stressed by a particular department to do otherwise. It is clear that the code has now required weather-strip and an equivalent amount of insulation as the surrounding area for the opening cover/door. Looking at the definition of weather-strip there can't be too much variation or interpretation on this term. Basically a material designed to seal or cover a joint between two different surfaces and keep the weather out. We should be taking this term at its face value. This would mean an assembly with material(s) that will reestablish the air tightness of the cover or door every time after use without any action required to restore the seal.

To the second part of this question. The members believe that this assembly could effectively be constructed on site or could be provided by a properly designed and installed pre-made unit available on the commercial market.

2. A plumber was faced with having to install a sump and lift station to eject wastes from a basement level. Plumbing Code sections 710.2 (Sewage Discharge), 710.3 (Sewage Ejector and Pumps) and 710.4 (Discharge Line) address the requirements and were clearly understood and would be implemented.

The basement fixtures that drained by gravity to the sump and ejector were not protected by a Backwater Valve prior to entering the sump basket. The plumber's reasoning was that since 710.3(2) and 710.4 require a back water valve and a gate valve on the discharge side of the ejector pump this met the requirements of the section 710.0 (Drainage of Fixtures Located Below the Next Upstream Manhole or Below the Main Sewer Level) and 710.1 (Backflow Protection).

Has the plumber with this backwater and gate valve on the discharge side of the ejector pump protected the lower level fixtures per the general requirement for sewer systems in 710.1? Does the plumber have a further obligation for a backwater valve other than the one required for a sump and ejector pump system?

This had to do with the suitability of the required check valve and gate valve on the discharge side of the lift station pump in the waste line as meeting the requirement for a backwater valve per (Section 710 Minnesota Plumbing Code) The committee agreed that it did meet the requirements and that no additional backwater valve up stream of the lift station sump was required.

3. Isolation of metallic gas pipe from abrasive and corrosive materials per Minnesota Fuel Gas Code 403.8 Protective Coating. “Is the polymer coating on CSST gas pipe sufficient to meet this requirement?”

No it is not sufficient. A search of a variety of CSST manufacturer’s requirements and installation instructions all refer to a requirement for protection. CSST must therefore be treated as any other pipe and must be protected from corrosive or abrasive environments, and no degree of protection should be accounted for by the existing polymer cover. The isolation of a metallic gas pipe from abrasive and corrosive materials is set forth in Minnesota Fuel Gas Code 403.8 Protective coating. The questioner was under the impression that for Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing (CSST) the polymer casing already supplied with the product met the requirements of this section. Apparently this is not the case. Research into product information and installation instructions for manufacturers and brands that could be found all indicate that separation from abrasive and corrosive materials in addition to the casing provided is required. The various manufacturer’s emphasis ranges from “should” to “must” types of language for their own product requirements. Additionally section 404.2 is specific in that CSST be installed per its listing and the manufacturer’s instructions.

4. A contractor is partially remodeling an office space and one of two existing breakrooms. The remodeled break room will be compliant with the 2015 Minnesota Accessibility Code while the existing break room to remain will not be code compliant. Both break rooms have kitchens. This situation would be allowed since section 1109.4 (Kitchens and kitchenettes) has a Minnesota Exception that states where multiple kitchens or kitchenettes are provided at least one shall be accessible.

The problem comes in that the remodeled break room kitchen while fully compliant will be converted to a kitchenette and be reduced in size to less than the unaltered break room. Section 1101.3 (Equity) a Minnesota provision requires that if similar type facilities are provided accessible and non-accessible they shall be the same or have equivalent elements.

Could you determine if the breakrooms are meeting the “equity” requirement even if they aren’t a point by point match?

The break rooms as proposed in the question are not meeting the Equity requirement Section 1101.3 of the Minnesota Accessibility Code. Clearly the accessible breakroom in the question is not as well appointed as the non-compliant break room tipping the balance to inequity. DOLI was consulted and agrees that they are not equitable per the code language. (Mostly)

However there was much discussion in the room that depending on the circumstances involved this application might be allowed to move forward based on it being a substantial improvement, a phased plan or a something is better than nothing outlook. A secondary question might be - If this is as far as the money took you under the 20% rule would this be allowed?