



**City of Houston  
Building Inspection  
CODE WORD 2003**

INTERPRETATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF  
THE HOUSTON ADOPTED CODES  
*2003 IBC, 2000 IRC, 2008 NEC, 2000 UMC  
2000 UPC, 2006 IECC AND 2008 HCEC*

Section 104.1 of the Building Code states: "The building official is hereby authorized and directed to enforce the provisions of this code. The building official shall have the authority to render interpretations of this code and to adopt policies and procedures in order to clarify the application of its provisions. Such interpretations, policies and procedures shall be in compliance with the intent and purpose of this code. "

In compliance with the intent of this section, documents are published which are referred to as CODE WORDS. The updated series of these documents herein will be referred to as CODE WORD 2003 and will replace and supersede all previous CODE WORD documents.

The purpose of CODE WORDS is to provide a single source of written policies, procedures and information to aid in the successful administration of the Building Code and city ordinances and to promote consistent, uniform practices.

Additions to CODE WORD 2003 are available on the Public Works and Engineering web site located at: [www.houstonpublicworks.org](http://www.houstonpublicworks.org).



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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>March 6, 1985</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Partial Occupancy of Buildings</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building Code</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>110</b>				

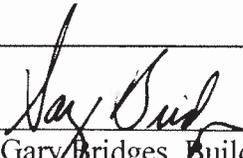
The Building Code requires a Certificate of Occupancy to be posted in a conspicuous place on the premises of all commercial buildings prior to occupancy. It also allows a Certificate of Occupancy to be issued for the use of a portion or portions of a building prior to the completion of the entire building or structure.

The policy relative to issuing partial Certificates of Occupancy is as follows:

1. The portion of the building where occupancy is requested must conform to the codes.
2. In fire-resistive buildings, the structural frame must be protected up to and including the floor of occupancy. If the ceiling membrane is part of the structural frame fire protection, then it must be installed throughout the floor of occupancy.
3. Where a standpipe system is required, the system must be in operation throughout the structure. If an automatic sprinkler system is required, it must be in operation throughout the areas to be occupied.
4. When a fire alarm is required, the system must be in operation for the floor of incidence, the floor above and floor below.
5. If the building falls within the scope of a high-rise building, all life safety requirements shall be in operation throughout the areas to be occupied.

The Certificate of Occupancy attests that the portion or portions for which the certificate is issued meets the codes, but not the total building. A separate certificate will be issued for each portion of the building upon completion of the space.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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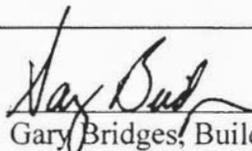
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>November 13, 1986</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation-Exiting Through Storerooms</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>1013.2</b>				

This section allows an exit through one adjoining or intervening room but states that "in other than dwelling units, exits shall not pass through kitchens, storerooms, restrooms, closets or spaces used for similar purposes."

A warehouse would not be considered as a "storage room" if the warehouse portion is as large or larger than the area it serves and meets all other requirements of this chapter.

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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>December 23, 1986</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Certificates of Occupancy and Compliance</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>110</b>				

The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines for the transition of occupancy classification and types of construction from the previous code to the designations in the current code. For a point of clarification it would not make any difference what designations are shown on the certificates as long as the authority having jurisdiction knows what the designation means as to the use and construction types and also the code that was in effect when the building was constructed. With this in mind the following procedures will be used in the future:

1. The current building code occupancy classification and type of construction will be shown on all occupancy or compliance certificates that are issued from occupancy inspection reports. The certificates will be coded as to which code was used in inspecting the building as follows:
  - 2003 Code- Buildings submitted for permit after January 4, 2006
  - 2000 Code- Buildings submitted for permit after July 15, 2002
  - 97 Code- Buildings submitted for permit after March 12, 2000
  - 94 Code- Buildings submitted for permit after January 26, 1997
  - 91 Code- Buildings submitted for permit after July 12, 1993
  - 88 Code- Buildings submitted for permit after March 25, 1990
  - 85 Code- Buildings submitted for permit after May 5, 1986
  - 72 Code- Buildings submitted for permit between June 1972 and May 5, 1986
  - 63 Code- Buildings submitted for permit between March 1963 and June 1972
  - U K Code- Buildings submitted for permit before March 1963 and buildings annexed into the City.
2. All certificates issued pursuant to a building permit application will have the same classification and type of construction as shown on the application and will be coded as above.



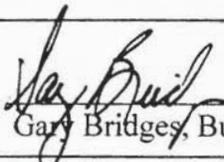
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<b>Certificates of Occupancy Continued</b>					

3. No certificate of Life Safety Code compliance will be issued unless the building complies with:
  - A. The building code that was in effect when the building was constructed.
  - B. Section 102 of the Building Code.
  - C. Appendix L of the Building Code.
4. All buildings permitted before March 1963 and buildings annexed into the City will be inspected for compliance with Section 102 and the Life Safety Appendix only.
5. Fees for inspections for a certificate of compliance shall be the same as for a certificate of occupancy.

Approved:

  
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Gary Bridges, Building Official



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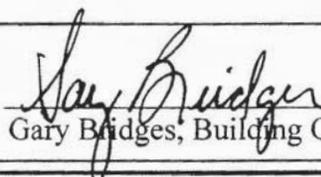
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>December 23, 1986</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Corridor Doors</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>715.3.3</b>				

Door assemblies in corridors and smoke barriers are required to be tested and labeled.

Doors without the labels shall be considered as having a 20 minute fire rating if they are of 1 3/4- inch thick solid bonded wood construction.

Door frames milled from 1½ - inch wood or metal door frames will be considered as meeting the 20 minute requirement without being labeled.

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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>January 16, 1987</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Address Change Procedure</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>501.2</b>				

The following will establish the procedure where a change to any existing address is requested. This policy affects the address assignment to the property according to Chapter 10, Section 211-217 and Chapter 40, Section 40-16 of Code of Ordinances. Street names will be assigned according to Chapters 40 & 42 of the Code of Ordinances.

1. Property owner/agent must submit a written request to the Building Official which includes the following:

- Existing Address
- Proposed Address
- Necessity of Address Change
- Account and Meter numbers for each utility serving the property at the correct address.

2. The permit section personnel will conduct an investigation of the request which will include a record search and field observation of existing properties with an address assigned. A written report of the records research and field observation will be provided to the Building Official for review along with the written request.

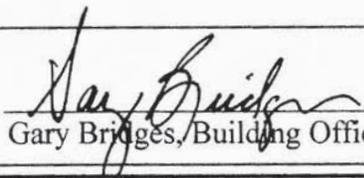
3. Approval/Disapproval by the Building Official:

A. If approved, the Permit Section personnel will notify the owner/agent of the approval and collect all necessary fees. The Permit Section personnel will forward "Notice of Address Change" to all parties including:

- U S Post Office
- All utilities
- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Harris County Appraisal District

B. If disapproved, the Permit Section personnel will notify the owner/agent of the status of the request for address change.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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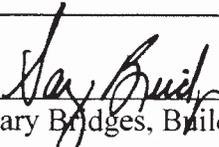
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>April 16, 1987</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Grease Traps</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Plumbing</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>1011.1</b>				

This section requires an approved type grease trap to be installed in the waste line leading from food establishments such as restaurants, cafes, lunch counters, cafeterias, bars, clubs, and hotel kitchens where large quantities of grease may be introduced into the drainage or sewage system.

This requirement shall not apply to day-care facilities, churches, employee lunch rooms and similar occupancies utilizing domestic type cooking equipment.

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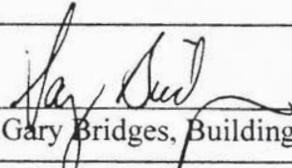
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>April 16, 1987</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Minor Addition</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>3403</b>				

Minor structural additions may be made with the same material or method of construction of which the existing building was constructed provided that such building, including the new addition, does not exceed the area and height allowed by Table 503 of the Building Code.

The determination of what constitutes a minor addition will be considered on a case by case basis. The reasoning and result of the determination shall be properly documented.

Approved:

  
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Gary Bridges, Building Official



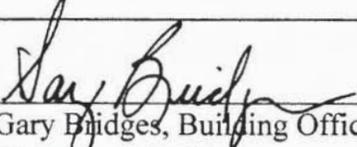
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>April 29, 1987</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Combustion Air</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Mechanical</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>702.1</b>				

As an alternate to the requirements of one half of the required combustion air opening being located within the lower 12 inches, all combustion air openings in an enclosure may be located within the upper 12 inches of the enclosure, provided there is an unobstructed area equal to twice the required opening area extending to the firebox.

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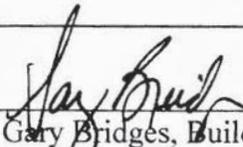
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>June 10, 1987</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Permit Tonnage Limitations</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Mechanical &amp; Building Code</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>121.4 UMC &amp; 117.3 IBC</b>				

Limitations regarding tonnage, assigned by code, for State Class "B" contractor licenses will be considered to limit the licensee to repair and install equipment developing a total of not more than 25 tons, or using compressors driven by not more than 30 horsepower.

This shall not limit a Class "B" contractor from installation or repair of air conditioning systems serving a building which contains more than 25 tons of mechanical refrigeration provided that no single system is greater than 25 tons, and that no single permit is greater than 25 tons. Subsequently, multiple permits may be purchased for a single address or building to form an aggregate of the total tonnage in multiples of 25 tons or less.

Approved:

  
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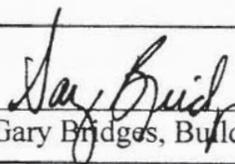
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>June 30, 1987</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Standpipes</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>L105.1</b>				

Section L105.1 specifies that buildings over four (4) stories shall be provided with an approved Class I or Class III standpipe system. Section 903 only prescribes a size of outlet for these systems and not the installation standards.

Existing wet standpipes with two and one-half inch (2 ½") outlets that comply with the code that was in effect when the building was constructed and that have been properly maintained shall be considered as meeting the requirements of the section.

The other installation standards of Chapter 9 apply to new or added standpipes.

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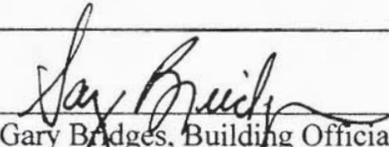
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>July 23, 1987</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Existing Exit Signs</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>L102.5</b>				

Section L102.5 requires that exit signs be provided for existing buildings as required by Section 1011 of the current code. This section requires that signs be provided in any occupancy when the exit serves an occupant load of 50 or more which in some cases will require exit signs that were not required under the previous code. Section L102.5 also makes exception to signs that are existing.

Existing signs will be considered as meeting the requirement of this section provided:

1. They have been maintained and are in compliance with the code under which the building was constructed.
2. They clearly indicate the direction of egress.
3. They are internally or externally illuminated or shall be of an approved self-luminous type.
4. The letters are at least 5 inches high and readily distinguishable.

Approved:

  
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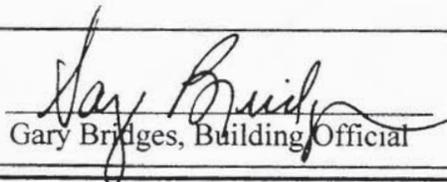
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>August 6, 1987</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Existing Mechanical Room Ceilings</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>102.6</b>				

Several methods were approved or accepted by the Building Official in the past to protect the structure within the mechanical room ceilings. All existing methods will be allowed to continue provided that the mechanical room is not part of a vertical opening.

All vertical openings must be protected as required by the Life Safety Appendix and the code that was in effect when the building was constructed.

Approved:

  
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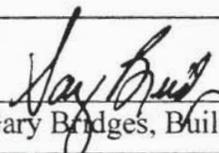
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>January 7, 1988</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Corridor Construction</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>1016</b>				

When a common corridor serves mixed occupancies the most restrictive occupancy shall determine the corridor requirements.

Exception: When minor uses do not occupy more than ten percent (10%) of the area served the major use shall determine the corridor requirements.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



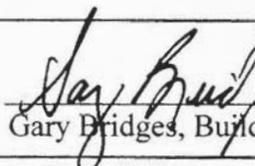
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<b>CW No:</b>	<b>2003-14</b>	<b>Page:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>March 7, 1988</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Emergency Pneumatic Systems</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>403</b>				

- a. The air compressor located within the building serving life safety functions shall be located in a two (2) hour rated enclosure. The air compressor, dryer and associated electrical equipment shall be served from the emergency generator.
- b. The air compressor may be located within the same rated enclosure that houses the emergency generator.
- c. The main pneumatic trunkline for life safety systems shall be protected by a two (2) hour rated enclosure or shall be a material that will withstand 1800 degrees F. for two (2) hours (i.e., stainless steel).
- d. Branch pneumatic lines run in air ducts or plenums shall have a flame-spread index of not more than 25 and a smoke-developed rating of not more than 50.

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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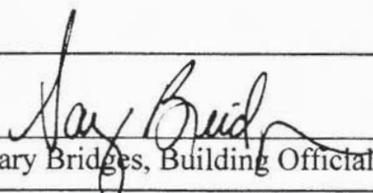
<b>CW No:</b>	<b>2003-15</b>	<b>Page:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>June 3, 1988</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Natural Gas Piping in Air Plenums and Ducts</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Mechanical</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>303.3</b>				

Fuel gas piping may be installed in accessible above-ceiling spaces used as a return air plenum provided no valves or pipe unions are located in such spaces.

Fuel gas piping shall not be run through a circulating air duct, ventilating duct, chimney or gas vent. This shall not apply to combustion air duct or combustion air chase or enclosure.

CODE REFERENCE: NFPA 54, Houston Plumbing Code Section 1211.10.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



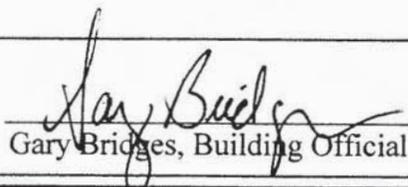
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>July 7, 1988</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Furnaces Located in Attics and Under Floor Spaces</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Mechanical &amp; Electrical</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>303.3, 424, 210.63, &amp; 210.70</b>				

In lieu of the Mechanical Code requirements for electric receptacles, lighting outlets and switches for furnaces located in an attic area, the requirements of Article 424 and 210.63, 210.70 of the Electrical Code shall apply.

Approved:

  
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>October 24, 1988</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Requirements for Engineer Seals</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>106.1</b>				

"The Texas Engineering Practice Act" was amended in the 77th legislature by Senate Bill 1797. Section 15(c) was added as follows: "This Act applies to all engineering practiced in this State that is not exempted under this Act. A public official of this state or of a political subdivision of this state who is charged with the enforcement of laws, ordinances, codes or regulations that affect the practice of engineering may only accept plans, specifications and other related documents prepared by registered engineers, as evidenced by the seal of the engineer. A public official shall report violations of this Act to the proper authorities".

Section 20(d) exempts from the provisions of the Act:

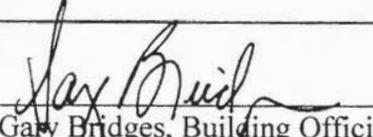
1. Any private dwelling, one story apartment buildings not exceeding eight units, two story apartment buildings not exceeding four units, garages or other structures pertinent to such buildings;
2. Private buildings used exclusively for farm, ranch or agricultural purposes, or used exclusively for storage of raw agricultural commodities; or
3. Other one story buildings, except public buildings, containing no clear span greater than 24 feet and having a floor area of 5000 square feet or less.

Section 19(b)(1) exempts public work under \$8000.00

The Engineering Practice Act applies to the design of structural, electrical, mechanical (heating, ventilating & air conditioning) and plumbing systems.

Plans submitted for permits will require engineer seals in accordance with state law unless specifically exempt. The design of air conditioning systems that licensed air conditioning contractors are permitted to perform under article 8861, V.T.C.S., serves as an exception to the Engineering Practice Act. Accordingly, the Engineering Practice Act, article 3271a, V.T.C.S., does not apply to design work performed by licensed air conditioning contractors under article 8861, V.T.C.S., the Air Conditioning Contractor License Law.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>November 15, 1988</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Permits for Various Type Projects</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>105.3</b>				

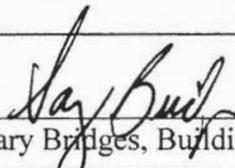
The building official shall require building permits to be issued as specified for the following projects:

1. New shell building with multiple leases or suites.
  - One permit for the shell and one permit for each space.
2. Remodel of more than one lease or suite in an existing building
  - One permit for each space.
3. Remodel of more than one location in the interior concerning the "shell" or "core" of the building.
  - The number of permits is at the option of the applicant.
4. Remodel exterior of multiple buildings.
  - One permit for each building.

Remodeling of any existing occupied area shall not increase the waste load or the square footage of the building, lease space or suite. Any change in these items constitutes new construction.

A Certificate of Compliance is available at the option of the applicant once remodeling of the existing occupied area is complete.

Definition: Suite- A group of connected rooms used as a unit.

Approved:   
Gary Bridges, Building Official



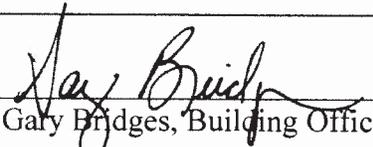
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>January 17, 1989</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Portable Type School Buildings</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>503.1.3</b>				

A group of portable type school buildings meeting the requirements of 503.3 shall be considered as one building. Only one side that exits from this group will be required to front on the 20 foot access to the public street and not each individual portable building.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



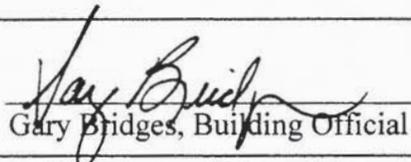
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>February 14, 1989</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Residential Setback</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Residential &amp; Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>R102.1 (IRC) &amp; 102.1 (IBC)</b>				

We will continue the interpretation established by Planning and Development that the location of residences relative to the setback line will be considered in compliance when the outside face of the front wall is behind the setback line (typically the foundation). Eaves and gutter overhangs, bay windows, porches, and other limited architectural protrusions into the setback area are acceptable.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



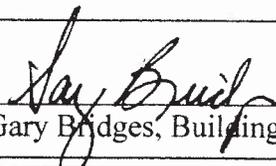
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>March 13, 1989</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Extent of Exit Enclosure (existing)</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>L102.1</b>				

As an alternate method of providing two separate distinct exits, exit enclosures may discharge into and through a street-floor lobby, provided the required exit width is free and unobstructed and the street/ground floor is protected with an automatic sprinkler system.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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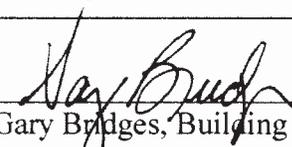
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>June 22, 1989</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Zero Lot Line</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Residential</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>R302.1 (IRC)</b>				

As an alternate to the requirements of the fire resistance of exterior walls for R3 Occupancies, building developments which are commonly known as Patio Homes and are restricted by recorded plats and deed restrictions as to location on the property, can be constructed on the property line without a fire resistive wall provided:

1. The adjacent structures are a minimum of 6 feet apart and;
2. The adjacent roof projections are not less than 4 feet apart.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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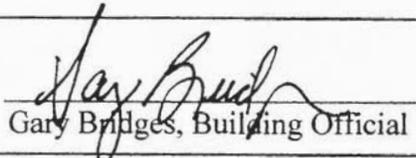
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>October 25, 1989</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Block and Base Foundations</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Residential &amp; Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>R404.1 (IRC) &amp; 1805.4.3 (IBC)</b>				

This policy is an acceptable alternate as per Section 104.11 of the Building Code and shall apply to conventional light-frame construction designed with girders and supported on blocks and bases in such a manner that the building can be easily leveled any time after the full load has been applied.

1. All loose material and vegetation must be removed to ensure solid bearing beneath bases.
2. Bases may be supported on previously paved areas such as parking lots.
3. End joints of girders shall occur over supports.
4. Minimum thickness of concrete bases shall be 4 inches.
5. The minimum width of the structure shall not be less than the overall height.
6. Girders shall not be placed further than the depth of the joist from the exterior wall.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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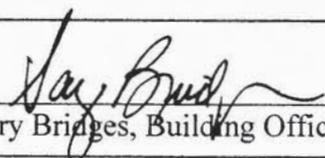
<b>CW No:</b>	<b>2003-24</b>	<b>Page:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>May 23, 1990</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Procedure- Glass in Corridor Walls</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>L102.3</b>				

As an alternate to the wired glass allowed in corridor walls by Section L102.3 of the Building Code, regular glass may be used subject to the following:

1. Both sides of the glass shall be protected by a sprinkler system equipped with listed quick-response sprinklers. The sprinklers shall be spaced 6 feet or less along both sides of the glass, not more than 1 foot from the glass and located so that the entire surface of the glass is wet upon operation.
2. The glass shall meet the safety and design requirements of Chapter 24.
3. Obstructions such as curtain rods, curtains, drapes or similar materials shall not be installed between the sprinkler and the glass.

Glass doors will be permitted provided they are considered as a part of the allowable glass area.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



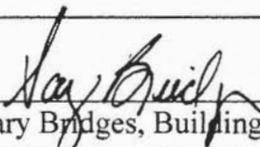
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>July 30, 1990</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Wired Glass in Existing Corridor Doors</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>L102.3</b>				

Existing glass in corridor doors may be replaced with polished wired glass, without limitation to the opening size, when complying with this section.

Approved:

  
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Gary Bridges, Building Official



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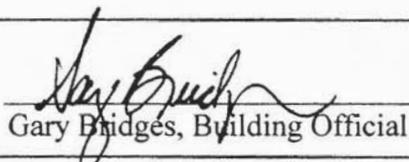
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>October 24, 1990</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Fire Alarm Systems</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>L108</b>				

The minimum requirement of this section is to provide a local fire alarm system for existing buildings that are either annexed into the City or were constructed within the City prior to Code requirements for alarm systems.

The reference to Section 403 shall be considered only for the purpose of requiring the evacuation alarm to sound on the floor of incidence, the floor above, the floor below and be heard clearly by all occupants of these floors.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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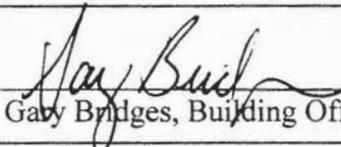
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>January 15, 1990</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Existing Bedroom Windows</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Residential</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>R310.1.1</b>				

Existing bedroom windows, including the frames that do not meet the current code, may be replaced with not less than the same size opening in the same location.

All replaced glass will be required to meet the safety glazing requirements of Chapter 24.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>April 1, 1991</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Size of Potable Water Piping</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Residential &amp; Plumbing</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>P2903 (IRC) &amp; 610 (UPC)</b>				

	Fixture Units		=	Total Fixtures
	Allowed	Each Item		Units
Water Closets	2	3	=	6
Bathtubs (with or without shower head over)	2	2	=	4
Shower	1	2	=	2
Lavatory	3	1	=	3
Kitchen Sink	1	2	=	2
Clothes washer	1	2	=	2
Hose Bibb	1	3	=	3

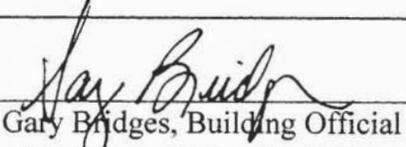
**Total = 22**

Any residential remodel or addition which would exceed a total of 22 fixture units will be required to comply with the current code requirements for water sizing. (EXCEPTION: A residential remodel or addition which would total 23 or 24 fixture units may be approved by the Plumbing Division Manager.)

The City of Houston will allow the following sizing on existing residences being remodeled or added on to with an existing 5/8" meter and 3/4" building supply:

Current Code would require a 1" water meter and a 1" building supply for the same fixture total. (NOTE: The above information is based on an average 100' developed length from the meter to the farthest most outlet on the water system using Table 6-4., Pressure Range 30-45 p.s.i.)

This interpretation is only valid for additions and remodels of single family residences.

Approved:   
Gary Bridges, Building Official



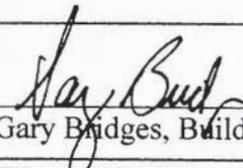
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>August 13, 1991</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Restroom Openings Into Corridors</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>1016</b>				

A separation will not be required between a restroom and a corridor provided the ceiling and walls of the restroom are constructed as required for the corridor.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>January 29, 1992</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Survey of Lot</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>106</b>				

The purpose of this policy on survey requirements is to assure that proposed construction does not cross any property lines without proper easements, does not extend onto or across easements without proper written permission, does not violate building line restrictions and does maintain the proper distance from underground pipelines or railroad easements.

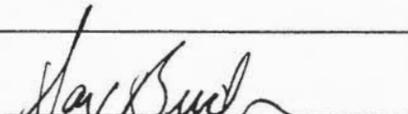
Sufficient lot and construction dimension information must be provided to conduct a satisfactory plan review. Acceptable alternates for the survey may be one of the following:

1. A copy of the survey furnished to the buyer when the property was purchased is normally required for all title insurance policies. The owner either has a copy or one may be obtained from the mortgage company holding the note on the property.
2. A complete plot plan usually satisfies the intent for a survey. A plot plan which is signed, sealed and dated by an architect or engineer, with a statement that it is complete, is acceptable. The plot plan shall show all property lines, building setback lines, building locations, easements and indicate the type of easement. The plot plan shall show driveway width and radius of turn at the curbs. If the plot plan appears to be incomplete or the drawing raises some questions to its accuracy, a survey may be required.
3. For single family residential, a complete plot plan usually satisfies the intent for a survey. The plot plan shall show all property lines, building setback lines, building locations, easements and indicate the type of easement. The plot plan shall show driveway width and radius of turn at the curbs. If the plot plan appears to be incomplete or the drawing raises some questions to its accuracy, a survey may be required.
4. A plot plan is required when foundation repair is proposed. It must show easements that affect proposed construction, existing buildings and property lines which affects adjacent property owners in those cases where structures are situated on a property with no building setback lines or such construction as townhouses with zero lot line separations.

The following must be included on the plot plan:

Easements for permanent encroachment where foundation work extends across the property line of patio homes and zero lot line houses.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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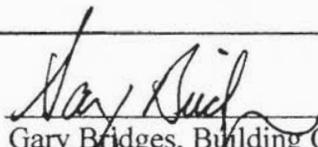
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<b>CW No:</b>	<b>2003-31</b>	<b>Page:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>September 29, 1992</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Bathroom and Clothes Dryer Ducts</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>711.4</b>				

Penetrations may be made in gypsum wallboard membranes for one-hour protection for bathroom and clothes dryer exhaust ducts without fire dampers provided:

1. A minimum of 0.019-inch (26 gauge) steel ducts are used continuously from the opening to the exterior or into a rated shaft.
2. Voids around the duct penetration shall be sealed with approved materials to prevent the passage of flame.
3. The maximum size of the bathroom fan assembly shall be 100 square inches.
4. The maximum size of the clothes dryer duct shall be 20 inches.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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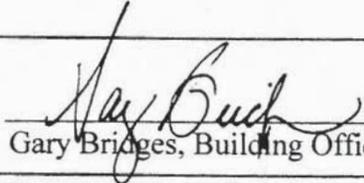
<b>CW No:</b>	<b>2003-32</b>	<b>Page:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>November 1, 1993</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Floor Drains and Indirect Waste Receptors in Walk-in Coolers and Freezers</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Plumbing &amp; City Code of Ordinances</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>801.2.2 (UPC) &amp; 20.21 item 17 (City Code of Ordinances)</b>				

Section 801.2.2 allows floor drains and indirect waste receptors in walk-in coolers and freezers to be connected to a separate drain line discharging to an outside receptor.

The Code of Ordinances 20.21, item 17 prohibits the direct connection of any floor drain or indirect waste receptor in walk-in coolers or freezers.

To maintain compatibility with the Health Department requirements, all floor drains and indirect waste receptors in walk-in coolers and freezers shall be indirectly connected to the sanitary sewer system.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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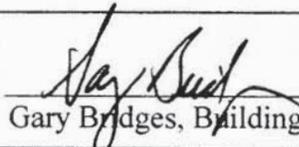
<b>CW No:</b>	<b>2003-33</b>	<b>Page:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>February 4, 1994</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Fire and Radiation Dampers in Existing Fire-rated Ceiling Assemblies</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Mechanical</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>606</b>				

Existing fire or radiation dampers may remain in existing fire-rated ceiling assemblies provided such fire or radiation dampers are not removed and reinstalled, or altered. Additionally, such fire or radiation dampers must exist in a condition acceptable to code regulations in effect at the time of their original installation.

Existing fire or radiation dampers in existing ceiling assemblies may be relocated within the ceiling assembly provided such relocation does not require the fire or radiation damper assembly to be disconnected from its existing connecting air duct. Additional ducts shall not be added to facilitate relocation of the fire or radiation damper assembly.

New openings in the ceiling assembly shall be protected in accordance with Section 606 of the Houston Mechanical Code.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>March 11, 1994</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Condensate Removal</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Residential &amp; Mechanical</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>M1411.3.1 (IRC) &amp; 310 (UMC)</b>				

**R1 & R2 Occupancies**

In R1 & R2 Occupancies only, where a cooling coil or cooling unit is installed in a furred space, attic, on a floor of the building above the ground floor, or in any area where damage may result from condensate overflow:

1. One pan with a standing overflow and a separate secondary drain may be provided in lieu of a secondary pan. The additional pan or standing overflow shall be provided with a drain pipe, minimum 3/4" nominal pipe size, discharging at a point which can be readily observed.
2. In the event that factory made equipment is provided with no standing overflow, or if the configuration of the installation makes it impractical to install a separate auxiliary drain line, a single primary drain may be used with no secondary drain pan or secondary drain line provided a float switch is installed in the main drain pan to shut off the cooling system in the event of condensate overflow.

**R3 Occupancies**

Air conditioning units installed in closets of R3 residential buildings may discharge condensate into a funnel drain without a trap primer, provided that: the trap is above the floor, the funnel is above the platform and is accessible when the closet door is open.

**All other occupancies**

In any occupancy, when a cooling coil or cooling unit is located in an area where the required secondary condensate drain pipe cannot be routed to a point which can readily be observed, the secondary drain pan or standing overflow outlet may be connected to the main drain line downstream of the primary drain pan provided the following requirements are met:



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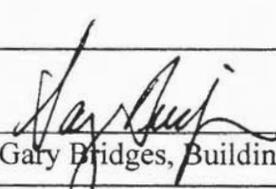
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<b>CW No:</b>	<b>2003-34</b>	<b>Page:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Condensate Removal continued</b>					

1. A float-switch designed to shut off the cooling unit is installed in the primary drain pan.
2. Appropriate fittings for the condensate piping in use are employed to make the secondary to primary pipe connection.
3. Adequate pipe insulation is installed on and around the secondary to primary pipe connection.

Condensate drains shall not connect to the tailpiece of a kitchen sink or to any such fixture serving a food preparation area, nor shall secondary drains be stubbed-out over any such fixture in a food preparation area.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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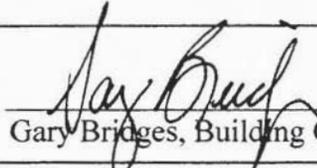
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>June 11, 1994</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Listed Type 1 Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Mechanical</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>507 &amp; 508</b>				

Exhaust hoods tested in accordance with U.L. Standard 710, listed and labeled by an approved testing agency are acceptable for use with commercial cooking equipment if installed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and terms of their listing.

Ancillary components of the exhaust hood must comply with the terms of listing. Where listing conditions or manufacturer's instructions do not address a specific item, the provisions of Sections 507 and 508 of the Houston Mechanical Code shall govern that item.

The components and configuration of each such system incorporating a listed hood is subject to the review and approval of the Building Official prior to its installation. Plans shall be submitted for review in accordance with Section 113 of the Houston Uniform Mechanical Code.

Approved:   
Gary Bridges, Building Official



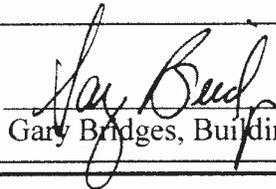
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>February 15, 1995</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Attic Access to Gas Fired Furnaces</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Mechanical &amp; Residential</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>904.5 (UMC) &amp; G2406.2 (IRC)</b>				

An access opening to a warm-air furnace located in a ventilated attic may be placed in the ceiling of a bedroom.

Approved:

  
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Gary Bridges, Building Official



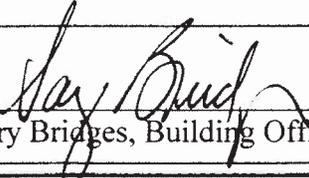
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>March 6, 1995</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Floor Drains for S-1, S-2, and M Occupancies</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Plumbing</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>1017.1</b>				

Floors that drain to a separator will only be required in service station bays and repair garages that may be subject to oil spillage and will not be required in garages used only for vehicle parking or under service station pump canopies.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



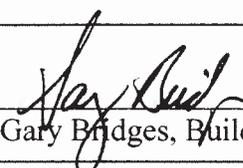
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>March 9, 1995</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Location of Downspouts</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Plumbing</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>Chapter 11</b>				

Gutters and downspouts accepting roof water are to be designed using Chapter 11, City of Houston Plumbing Code. All downspouts shall be connected to the gutter not to exceed 60' - 0" distance between downspout connections.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>April 21, 1995</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Utility Inspection Procedure</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Mechanical &amp; Residential</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>116 (UMC) &amp; R109 (IRC)</b>				

The following procedure applies only to dwellings of occupancy classification R-3.

A mechanical contractor may obtain a "utility inspection" up to 10 days prior to installing a condensing unit and/or kitchen ventilator provided the following conditions are met:

1. A temporary inspection fee of \$30.00 has been paid in accordance with Section 117.3.2 of the Building Code. Such fee shall be paid by obtaining a separate HVAC permit in addition to the regular installation permit. The utility permit must be specified at the time of application as an "AY" permit type.
2. All other components of the HVAC system are complete and installed in accordance with code requirements.
3. Kitchen Ventilation:
  - (i) Ductwork serving future ventilation equipment, whether such ductwork is installed underground, within kitchen cabinetwork or elsewhere, must be installed prior to the utility inspection, be in accordance with code and prepared to accept the proposed ventilation equipment.
  - (ii) Electrical wiring serving future kitchen ventilation equipment shall be installed prior to the utility inspection, be in accordance with code and prepared to accept the proposed ventilation equipment.



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<b>Utility Inspection Procedure continued</b>					

4. Air-Conditioning Condensing Unit:

- (i) Refrigeration piping, pipe insulation and control wiring serving future condensing unit(s) shall be installed to the point of connection to the proposed condensing unit, be in accordance with the code and prepared to accept the condensing unit(s).
- (ii) Electrical wiring serving a future condensing unit(s) shall be installed prior to the utility inspection, be in accordance with code and prepared to accept the proposed condensing unit(s).

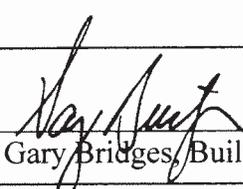
5. Final Inspection:

- (i) Upon installation of the ventilation or condensing unit, the mechanical contractor (permittee) shall notify the Mechanical Section in a manner established and consistent with the scheduling of any other inspection and shall request a final utility inspection. The mechanical contractor shall make all necessary preparations with builders, homeowners, etc., to facilitate the inspector's access to the property at the time of inspection.
- (ii) Such utility inspection shall be secured within ten (10) working days of the date of installation of either the proposed ventilation equipment or proposed condensing unit.

6. Non Conformance Sanctions:

- (i) Mechanical contractors (permittee), upon failure to secure final inspection as indicated in item 5 above, will be subject to sanctions including but not limited to the following:
  - a. The contractor's ability to obtain permits will be suspended until compliance is secured.
  - b. A Municipal Court citation may be issued pursuant to Section 111.2 of the Mechanical Code.
  - c. Additional use of the Utility Inspection procedure will be suspended.

Approved:

  
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Gary Bridges, Building Official

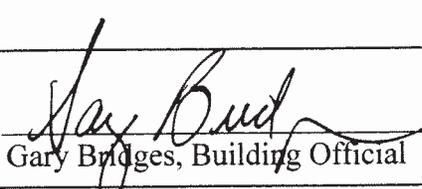


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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>May 19, 1995</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Double Doors Signage</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>1008.1.8.4</b>				

When doors are allowed to use manually operated edge or surface mounted bolts in accordance with exception 2 of this section, the doors shall also provide a permanently affixed sign stating, "THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED DURING BUSINESS HOURS".

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



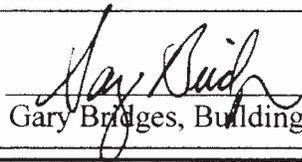
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>October 19, 1995</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Main Exit Doors</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>1008.1.8.3</b>				

This is to clarify that a building or space can have more than one main exit as allowed in the exception of this section. Any door or pair of doors that are used by the general public as an entrance and exit to and from the business, will be considered as a main exit. Any door provided for exit purposes only, will not be considered as a main exit and will not be allowed to use these exceptions.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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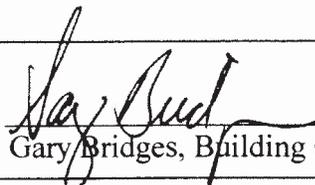
<b>CW No:</b>	<b>2003-42</b>	<b>Page:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>November 27, 1995</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Plan and Profile Drawings</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>106</b>				

A "conditional" permit for a project requiring plans and profile utility drawings may be issued prior to the plan and profile drawing approval provided the owner makes a written request to the building official that includes the following:

1. A description of the work requiring a plan and profile.
2. A confirmed compliance date.
3. A statement acknowledging and agreeing to the condition that if the plans and profile drawing have not been approved by the compliance date, as agreed upon, the City of Houston will not grant final inspection, the Certificate of Occupancy will not be issued and final release of utilities will not be granted.
4. A statement from the owner acknowledging and agreeing to the condition that failure to obtain approval within the specified time may result in citations being issued pursuant to the code.
5. A statement releasing the City of any and all liability for the proposed project in the event that the City is unable to provide the specific utility services proposed in the plans and profile drawings.

The issuance of the "conditional" permit shall be approved by the Building Official and the Manager of the Utility Analysis Section.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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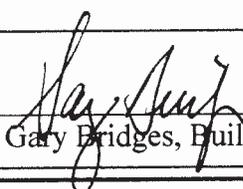
<b>CW No:</b>	<b>2003-43</b>	<b>Page:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>November 28, 1995</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Electronic Locking Devices</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>1008.1.3.4</b>				

**SPECIFIC APPROVAL**

When approved by the Building Official, electronic locking devices may be used to meet specialized security needs such as, but not limited to, Alzheimer units, infant protection devices, money handling rooms for security purposes, night operation of convenience stores or police stations, etc. This specific approval will require the door to be monitored by an on-site guard, staff or employee trained in the method of releasing the locking device at times when the building or space is occupied.

A separate permit for specific approval shall be required for each locking device and may be revoked at any time by the Building Official for due cause.

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



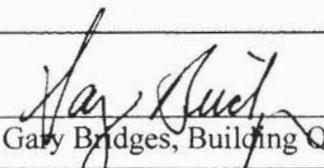
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>January 4, 1996</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Grease Interceptors</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Plumbing</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>1012 and Appendix H</b>				

Grease interceptors may be installed in series for one establishment provided the capacity of the first interceptor is not less than 1000 gallons and the total of all the interceptors is equal or greater than the capacity required in Appendix H.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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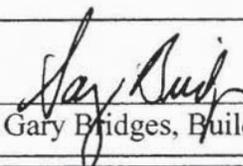
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>February 1, 1996</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Existing Transit Shed</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>102.6 &amp; 311</b>				

An existing transit shed shall be classified as a Group S, Division 1 occupancy as provided in Section 311 of the building code. It is assumed that such use was legal at the time of construction and complied with the codes at that time, as addressed in Section 102.6 of the building code.

New buildings and changes of use shall be classified according to its use or character under the current building code.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>October 15, 1996</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Utility Release Option</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Mechanical, Electrical &amp; Plumbing</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>112 (UMC), 103 (UPC), 302.1 (NEC)</b>				

**PURPOSE:** Utility release options allow such items as dishwashers, ranges, condensing units, charcoal cooktops and other such fixtures and appliances to be absent from the completed residence during the final inspection while providing approval for the release of utility connections.

**PERMIT:** A permit for each craft involved in a particular appliance or fixture is required in order to facilitate a Utility Release Option. Permits must be purchased at the same time the regular permit is obtained, or at any point during construction of the house. This permit is a separate distinct project number from the original and should indicate "for appliances not set. REF: \_\_\_\_\_"(original project number)

### **PROCEDURE**

#### **Plumbing**

A "temporary gas permit" must be obtained by the licensed plumber using the project number of the primary construction project. Contractors shall schedule a final inspection as usual. The existence of a temporary gas permit will indicate to the inspector that certain plumbing items will be absent. At the time the inspection is called into the Plumbing Section, the contractor shall clearly indicate that there is a temporary gas permit and that certain plumbing items will be absent at the time of the final inspection. All plumbing other than the specific item(s) to remain absent shall be complete and in compliance with the code. Upon approval by the inspector, the temporary gas permit will allow the gas utility company to install the gas meter.

The primary project will not be fully finalized until the absent appliances or fixtures are installed and inspected by the plumbing inspector. The primary project will remain active for a period of one-hundred eighty (180) days. During that period, it is expected that the absent equipment or fixture will be installed and inspected.

The plumbing contractor must remain vigilant and secure inspection on the primary permit as soon as the absent plumbing items are completed.



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<b>Utility Release Option continued</b>					

**Mechanical**

Air Conditioning contractors who will complete the installation of the environmental air conditioning system less the condensing unit, and/or complete the installation of the air-conditioning system less the kitchen ventilation device, must follow the provisions of Code Word 2003-37.

**Electrical**

A "Miscellaneous Electrical Permit" a separate distinct project number for "appliances not set REF: \_\_\_\_\_" for those items that will be absent at the time of final inspection must be obtained by the Master Electrician using a new project number. This type of permit is called a "single trade miscellaneous permit". Contractors shall schedule a final inspection as usual. The existence of a miscellaneous permit will indicate to the inspector that certain electrical items will be absent. At the time the inspection is called into the Electrical Section, the contractor shall clearly indicate that there is a miscellaneous permit and that certain electrical items will be absent at the time of final inspection. All electrical other than the specific item(s) to remain absent shall be complete and in compliance with the code. Upon approval by the inspector, the electrical permit on the primary project number will be finalized. The miscellaneous permit remains active and at such time the absent items are complete, the contractor must call for inspection using the single trade miscellaneous permit number.

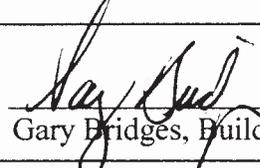
The single-trade project will remain active for a period of one-hundred eight (180) days. During that period, it is expected that the absent connection, equipment or fixture will be installed and inspected.

The electrical contractor must remain vigilant and secure inspection as soon as the absent items have been installed.

**Important Note:**

Construction superintendents, builders, developers or others in control of construction projects must direct their MEP subcontractors to contact the Building Inspection Division, City of Houston, for instructions and assistance in establishing the appropriate utility release permits. Only licensed contractors may obtain the necessary permits.

**Plumbing Inspection Section.....713-535-7700**  
**Electrical Inspection Section.....713-535-7600**  
**Mechanical Inspection Section.....713-535-7755**

Approved:   
 Gary Bridges, Building Official



City of Houston  
Building Inspection  
**CODE WORD 2003**

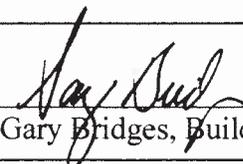
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>April 17, 1997</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Foundation Elevation</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>509.1</b>				

The minimum height requirement of a foundation above the nearest sanitary sewer manhole as specified in Section 509 of the Building Code will not be required in annexed subdivisions provided:

1. The subdivision was platted and recorded prior to annexation, and
2. The sanitary sewer system for the subdivision was installed prior to annexation, and
3. The drainage piping from a building meets the requirements of Section 710 of the Plumbing Code.

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



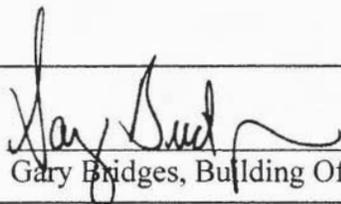
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>May 19, 1997</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>School Vocational Shops</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>Table 302.3.2</b>				

Classrooms located within the vocational shop area and used by the shop students will be considered as part of the shop area and will not require a separation. The code does require a one-hour separation between shop areas and other portions of the building and also between each vocational shop area.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>January 6, 1998</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Requirement of at Least One Handrail for Every Stairway on Existing Buildings</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>L102.2</b>				

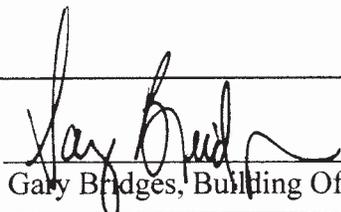
The following interpretation is to be applied to all stairways of buildings inspected for Appendix L of the building code.

Every stairway shall have at least one handrail.

**EXCEPTION:**

Stairways having less than four risers.

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>December 3, 1998</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>R-1 or R-2 Conversions</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>3406</b>				

Section 3406 of the code grants wide authority to the building official to use judgment in determining the level of safety and which code requirements will apply when a change of occupancy is proposed to an existing building. Reference is made in Chapter 34 of the Building Code to Appendix M for determining the level of hazard. In order to provide consistency in the requirements, the attached guidelines have been developed to use when converting an existing building to an apartment or hotel. The minimum Appendix L life-safety requirements shall apply. See the table on page 2.



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<b>R-1 and R-2 conversions continued</b>					

**CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY - GROUP B TO GROUP R-1 OR R-2**

1. Sprinkler System	As required per current code.
2. Fire Alarm System	As required per current code.
3. Natural Light	As required per current code.
4. Stair Enclosures	Rated enclosure is required but one stair may discharge through a street floor lobby.
5. Stair Rise and Run	Existing stairs do not have to be changed if they meet life-safety. New stairs must comply.
6. Stair Pressurization	As required per current code. However, if it can be determined that there are practical difficulties with the existing construction, an alternate will be considered by the Building Official.
7. Exterior Walls	May keep existing construction and openings per Appendix M.
8. Fire Command Station	As required per current code for high-rise buildings.
9. Smoke Control System	Not required unless required when constructed.
10. Corridors	As required per current code.
11. Type of Construction	As required per current code.
12. Emergency Generator for High-Rise	As required per current code.
13. Vertical Openings	As required per current code.
14. Ventilation / Fresh Air	As required per current code.
15. Bathrooms	As required per current code.
16. Structural	As required per current code.

Approved:

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Gary Bridges, Building Official



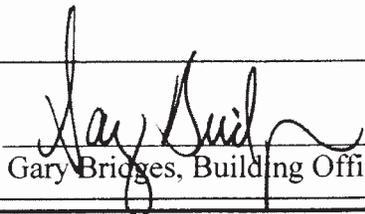
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>February 28, 2000</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Hazardous Materials Storage Canopies</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building &amp; Fire</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>903.2.4 (IBC) &amp; 2704.13 (IFC)</b>				

An automatic fire-extinguishing system will not be required for an open canopy that meets the requirements of Section 2704.13 of the Fire Code and is used for sheltering outdoor hazardous material unless the sprinkler system is required by the Fire Code for outdoor storage. The canopy will be classified in the appropriate H occupancy classification with the notation on the permit "Canopy for Hazard Material Storage." All such structures shall be routed to the Fire Department for approval.

Approved:

  
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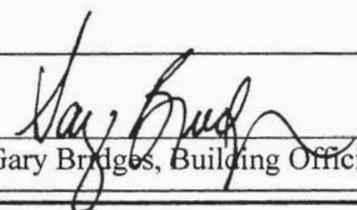
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>November 8, 2001</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Corridors in Existing Schools</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>L102.3</b>				

As an alternate to the requirement for rated corridors in existing schools, an automatic fire alarm system may be provided. The system shall consist of the following:

1. Smoke detectors in the exit corridors, common areas, offices and classrooms.
2. Manual pull-boxes by all exits from each floor of the building.
3. Automatic detectors (heat or smoke) in mechanical rooms, storage rooms and similar areas.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>February 5, 2002</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Foundation Elevation</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Residential</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>P 3008</b>				

Section 509 of the Building Code (see below) shall be used in order to prevent the backflow of sewage as addressed in this section of the Residential Code.

**SECTION 509-FOUNDATION ELEVATION**

**509.1 General.** All new buildings constructed within this jurisdiction shall have the finished floor of the building not less than 12 inches above the nearest sanitary sewer manhole rim, or, where no sewer is available, the finished floor shall not be less than 4 inches above the crown of the street.

**EXCEPTION:** Where a greater elevation is required by Chapter 19 of the City Code, then Chapter 19 shall control.

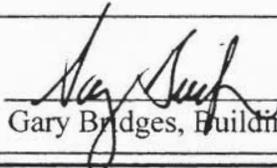
**509.2 Plans and Applications.** All construction plans and applications submitted for construction, sewer connections or septic systems shall reflect the elevations of the finished floor of the building and the elevation of the nearest manhole rim or crown of the street, whichever is applicable.

**509.3 Damage Risk.** All permits for connection shall be issued on the condition that the owner take all the risk of damage that may result from water backing up into the premises from the sewer.

**509.4 Existing Structures.** Existing structures required to be connected with public or private sewer shall have the finished floor a minimum of 12 inches above the nearest manhole.

**EXCEPTION:** Where the public or private sewer is not of sufficient depth, or where structures required to be connected to the sewer cannot meet the minimum requirements of this section and other ordinances, the building official may authorize the issuance of a permit for an alternate method of construction or installation when this will not be detrimental to the health, welfare, and safety of the public.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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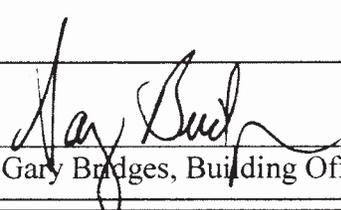
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>February 27, 2002</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Plumbing Plan Review Requirement for Building Permits</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Plumbing</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>Chapter 11</b>				

The following types of projects on private property do not require a storm-water plan review:

1. Pothole repair in existing parking lots.
2. Asphalt resurfacing (not exceeding 2" in depth) of existing parking lots.
3. Sidewalks and driveways.
4. Installations of buildings on block and base type foundations that do not require new or additional paved parking areas or other types of site work that may change or impede the existing property drainage.
5. Carports constructed over an existing pavement where the construction will not cause roof drainage to cross adjacent property lines.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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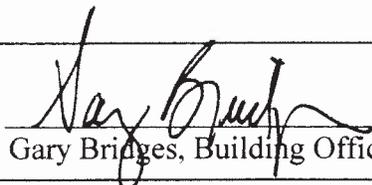
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>May 30, 2002</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Parapets</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Residential</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>R321.2.2</b>				

The exception for parapets required to extend above common exterior walls of townhomes applies when the roof covering is minimum class B and there is no roof opening within 5 feet of the wall.

For purposes of this requirement a chimney that projects through a roof within 5 feet of the common wall is considered to be in compliance when the chimney extends at least 5 feet above the roof deck and is built of one hour rated construction.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>December 2, 2002</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Residential Garage Disappearing Stairs and Other Attic Access Openings</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Residential</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>R309.2</b>				

Section R309.2 of the Residential Code states in part:

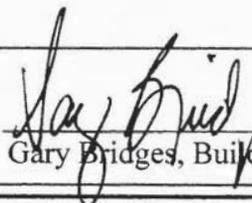
“Attic disappearing stairs may be installed in the garage ceiling provided the exposed panel is not less than 3/8" thick fire retardant-treated-plywood or covered with a minimum of 16 gauge sheet-metal.”

In addition to these two methods identified in the code for garage separations, the following methods are also acceptable for protecting the attic disappearing stairs and other attic access openings:

- untreated plywood protected with 1/2 inch thick gypsum board
- untreated plywood protected with an intumescent paint

In all cases the opening protection material is applied to the garage side of the plywood.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>January 21, 2003</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Policy- Commercial Energy Code Compliance at Certain Stages of Construction</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Commercial Energy</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>5, 6, 7, 8 and 9</b>				

In order to provide consistency in requirements, the attached guidelines have been developed to determine the level of energy code compliance required for each type of project or stage of construction listed in the table.

For the purpose of this Code Word “building envelope” shall mean the structural portion of the building surrounding conditioned space that separates conditioned and unconditioned spaces.

City of Houston Energy Code Compliance Policy		
Scope	Condition	Results
<b>New Shell Buildings</b> <i>(applies when the occupancy is likely to have future air conditioning or heating)</i> i.e. retail / office / warehouse	Location & extent of building envelope is not known at present <i>(i.e. spec office/warehouse)</i>	No building envelope requirements in walls or roof at this stage. Glazing must meet: U-factor = .70*, SHGC = .40* *subject to projection factor reductions.
	Shell is for building that will be fully conditioned <i>(i.e. strip centers, multi-story)</i>	Full building envelope compliance required.
<b>New Build Out</b> <i>(first time build-out in shell structure)</i>	Shell has a compliant building envelope.	Mechanical, Electrical, and plumbing compliance only.
	Shell has a non-compliant building envelope	Full building envelope compliance and Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing compliance for the new build out.
<b>Change in Occupancy</b>	New occupancy uses more energy.	Apply Energy Code to altered portions.
	New occupancy uses the same or less energy.	No energy requirements.

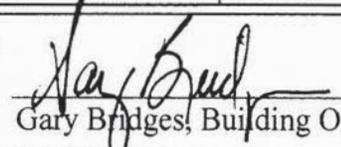


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<b>Commercial Energy Code Compliance at Certain Stages of Construction continued</b>					

<b>Previously Unconditioned Spaces</b> <i>(adding air conditioning equipment to unconditioned spaces or buildings, or adding-on to a conditioned space inside an unconditioned space) i.e. add-on to an office inside a warehouse.</i>	All walls and roof/ceiling already exist in the unconditioned space	Building envelope components surrounding entire newly conditioned area shall comply. Other affected systems shall also comply.
	Adding a conditioned space to a previously unconditioned area with new walls or ceilings.	New and changed portions of the building envelope need to comply. Affected systems other than the building envelope components shall comply.  <i>Note: <sup>1</sup> Any existing wall, ceiling or roof that changes status from "not" being part of a building envelope to becoming part of a new building envelope needs to comply. <sup>2</sup> Any building envelope that previously surrounded conditioned space is not changing status and may remain as built.</i>
<b>Remodels/Alterations/Repairs</b>  <i>Note: Windows that are completely replaced including frame and sash must comply. Note: window glazing may be replaced without complying.</i>	Work affects the building envelope	Building envelope or portion of the building envelope must comply if a substantial full span of the wall area "corner to corner", or ceiling "edge to edge", is exposed or altered. Affected systems other than the building envelope components shall comply.
	Work does not affect the building envelope	No building envelope compliance required. Other affected systems shall comply.
<b>Historical Buildings</b>		Construction, alteration, repair, enlargement, restoration, relocation, or moving of buildings or structures identified and classified as historically significant by the state or local jurisdiction, listed in <i>The National Register of Historic Places</i> or which have been determined eligible for such listing shall not be mandatory for existing buildings or structures specifically.
<b>Electrical</b> <i>(Any work involving light switches or that involve partitions resulting in changing office sizes will trigger switching requirements)</i>	Work does not involve changing or adding light fixtures	No requirements for electrical budget analysis. Existing fixtures may be relocated.
	Work involves changing or adding light fixtures	In the electrical energy budget, analyze only the area to be served by the lights that are removed. Determine the Energy Code maximum wattage for just that area and the new lights can be installed as long as they comply.
	Work involves obvious overall reduction in wattage <i>(i.e. removing lights or replacement lights are all low watt)</i>	Electrical energy budget analysis does not need to be completed.

Approved:   
 Gary Bridges, Building Official



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Building Inspection  
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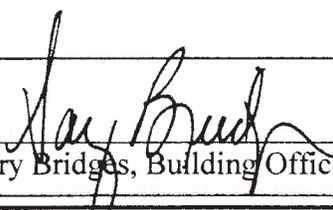
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>April 23, 2003</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation- Plumbing Facilities at Open-Air Transit Centers</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>2902.1</b>				

Structures used for people awaiting transportation, such as transit centers, shall not be required to install plumbing facilities, under the following conditions:

1. No employees or security personnel remain on the premises unless in transit or providing temporary maintenance.
2. The structure is an open-air structure with no enclosing walls.
3. The structure is only intended to shelter people awaiting transportation.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



City of Houston  
Building Inspection  
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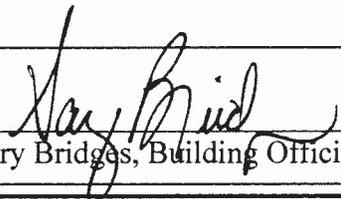
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>October 15, 2003</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Exemptions From Permits and Electrical Work</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Electrical</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>301</b>				

Permit requirements along with permit exemptions are listed in Section 301 of the Electrical code. One permit exemption includes "motors, office furnishings (as defined by NFPA 70, Article 605) or other appliances energized by means of a cord or cable having an attachment plug end to be connected to an approved receptacle when the cord or cable is permitted by code.

The interpretation for light fixtures listed as portable and powered by plugging the cord into a receptacle is that the fixture is exempt from permits when installed according to the listing and the manufacturer's instructions.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official



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Building Inspection  
CODE WORD 2003**

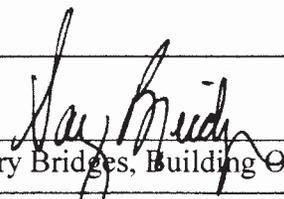
INTERPRETATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF  
THE HOUSTON ADOPTED CODES  
2003 IBC, 2000 IRC, 2008 NEC, 2000 UMC,  
2000 UPC, 2006 IECC and 2008 HCEC

<b>CW No:</b>	<b>2003-60</b>	<b>Page:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>*NEW TO BE APPROVED</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Residential Occupancies Explained</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Building</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>310</b>				

The matrix below has been constructed to help with the understanding of the R occupancies as addressed by the 2003 Building Code.

<b>Use</b>	<b>Number of Occupants</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Single family home	1 family <sup>1</sup>	R-3	Use IRC code
Boarding house (transient) <sup>2</sup>	Any	R-1	
Boarding house (not transient)	Any	R-2	
Congregate living facility <sup>3</sup>	16 or less	R-3	Use IBC provisions for the R-3 occupancies (limited in height, etc)
Congregate living facility <sup>3</sup>	More than 16	R-2	Sprinklers required
Residential care/assisted living facilities	6 to 16, excluding staff	R-4	Sprinklers required

1. Family: An individual or two or more persons related by blood or marriage or a group of not more than 10 persons (excluding servants) who need not be related by blood or marriage living together in a dwelling unit.
2. Transient: Occupancy of a dwelling unit or sleeping unit for not more than 30 days.
3. Congregate living facility: A building or portion thereof that contains facilities for living, sleeping and sanitation, as required by this code, and may include facilities for eating and cooking, for occupancy by other than a family. A congregare living facility may be a shelter, convent, monastery, dormitory, fraternity, or sorority house, but does not include jails, hospitals, nursing homes, hotels or boarding houses.

Approved:   
 Gary Bridges, Building Official



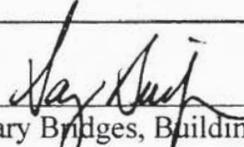
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INTERPRETATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF  
THE HOUSTON ADOPTED CODES  
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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>April 13, 2009</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Residential Post Tension Foundation</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Residential</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>R401.2</b>				

A foundation for a residential structure or addition that is designed as a post-tension building element shall be documented in accordance with Section 1704.4 of the Building Code. This shall include sealed engineering design and qualified special inspection reports.

Approved:

  
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Gary Bridges, Building Official



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2003 IBC, 2000 IRC, 2008 NEC, 2000 UMC,  
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<b>CW No:</b>	<b>2003-62</b>	<b>Page:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>of</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>April 13, 2009</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Interpretation – Lighting Controls</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>Commercial Energy Code</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>9.4.1.1 and 9.4.1.2</b>				

This interpretation is to clarify the requirements and the exceptions to the Energy Code provisions for lighting controls.

Section 9.4.1.1 requires that buildings larger than 5,000 ft<sup>2</sup> be controlled by an automatic means that will shut off all of the spaces within the building.

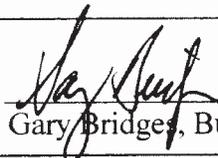
Section 9.4.1.2 is a separate and independent requirement for space controls for all spaces within a building, regardless of the building size.

All spaces within the building shall be required to automatically turn off lights within 30 minutes of the occupants leaving unless the space is a classroom, conference/meeting room, break or lunch room with bi-level switching.

If occupancy sensors are installed in all rooms of a building, the occupancy sensors meet the requirements of both sections of the code.

The intent of these two sections of the code is to turn the lights out without occupancy intervention within an allotted amount of time. With the understanding that occupancy sensors will meet this requirement often, the intent is not to disallow other technologies that may be more efficient for the use of the structure.

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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>April 13, 2009</b>				
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Location of Stationary Combustion Engines (Standby Power Systems)</b>				
<b>CODE(S):</b>	<b>2000 International Fire Code; NFPA 37 and NFPA 110</b>				
<b>SECTION(S)</b>	<b>IFC 604; NFPA 110-8 (5.6.1) and NFPA 37-10 (4.1.4)</b>				

The Houston Fire Code (2000), Section 604 Emergency and Standby Power Systems, requires all emergency and standby power systems installed in accordance with the Houston Electrical Code (2008), NFPA Standards 110 and 111.

NFPA 110-8 Emergency Power Supply: Energy Sources, Converters, and Accessories; Section 5.6.1 General, requires all stationary combustion engine installations to comply with NFPA 37, Standard for the Installation and use of Stationary Combustion Engines and Gas Turbines.

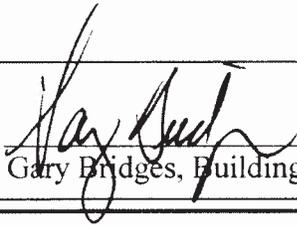
**NFPA 37-10, Section 4.1.4 is interpreted to mean the following:**

A minimum separation shall not be required from combustible walls when either of the following conditions exist:

- (1) The adjacent wall of the structure has a fire resistance rating of at least one-hour, or
- (2) The weatherproof enclosure is constructed of noncombustible materials and it has been demonstrated that a fire within the enclosure will not ignite combustible materials outside the enclosure.

**Substantiation:** Without the underlined text above, this requirement is misunderstood and is enforced requiring both conditions (1 and 2) to be met, in order to qualify for the exemption from minimum separation distance. The NFPA Technical Committee issued a statement explaining that was never the intent. It was always intended that these be alternatives to select from.

Approved:

  
Gary Bridges, Building Official