



CODEWORD

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BOARD OF BUILDING REGULATIONS & STANDARDS

July 2000

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INSURANCE SERVICES ORGANIZATION RECOGNIZES MASSACHUSETTS STATE BUILDING CODE AND PROFESSIONALISM OF BUILDING OFFICIALS

On 24 August 1992, Hurricane Andrew made landfall in Florida. The resulting structural damage to buildings represented one of the single largest insurance losses of any natural disasters in the USA. Following the event, insurance companies undertook an investigation to ascertain the reason for the losses eventually concluding that; many buildings were not being constructed in accordance with building codes in effect at that location and; that the building codes were not as stringent as they should be. The investigation also concluded that building code enforcement was lax.

As a result, the Insurance Services Office (ISO) developed a program called the "Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule" (BCEGS) which would be applied across the country. Under the program, every building department and every building code in the country would be evaluated. Each municipality would then be graded and points would be deducted from an ideal number, based on a field evaluation of the building department and on the currency of the code in use (amongst other items). Insurance credits would then be given based on the BCEGS points scored. Re-evaluation would occur on a 3-year cycle - co-incidentally the time period when model code groups issue new editions of their respective codes.

The following is excerpted from ISO's web page and is an explanation of the BCEGS from the insurance industry's perspective

"Not all communities have equally stringent building codes, nor do all communities enforce their codes with equal vigor. Yet the effectiveness of local building codes can help you predict how

well a structure will fare in a hurricane, earthquake, or other natural disaster.

After Hurricane Andrew, photos of Homestead, Florida, showed homes on one side of a street completely destroyed, while homes on the other side were still standing. Later inspection determined that, in many cases, construction of the destroyed buildings was well below the standard required by the building code in effect. ISO's Building Code Effectiveness Classifications help you distinguish between communities with effective building code enforcement and those with weak enforcement.

The concept is simple: municipalities with effective, well-enforced codes demonstrate better loss experience when catastrophe strikes. Buildings located in such communities — constructed according to current codes — likewise experience less severe loss.

ISO collects information on the building codes in effect in a particular community, as well as how the community enforces its building codes. We then analyze the data using our Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) and assign a grade from 1 to 10. Grade 1 represents exemplary commitment to building-code enforcement; Grade 10 indicates no recognizable enforcement. Insurers can use the gradings to grant premium credits for buildings constructed under strictly enforced codes".

.....Excerpted from ISO web page

Massachusetts communities scored well in the initial evaluation cycle, however, during the 1999 re-evaluation cycle, local building officials began to make the BBRS aware that their communities were being downgraded on the basis that Massachusetts was utilizing an

'outdated' building code. (Massachusetts uses the 1993 BOCA National Building Code as a basis for its building code.).

BBRS contacted ISO and demanded that ISO explain this position, and argued that mere currency with national model codes should not be the only yardstick to measure code effectiveness as this completely ignores the technical merits of any "non-current" code. BBRS argued that, although based on the 1993 edition, Massachusetts has modified this code to such an extent that the code in Massachusetts is more stringent (in terms of natural disaster mitigation standards) than any of the latest model codes. In addition, Massachusetts requires all building officials to be certified by the BBRS and to complete 45 hours of continuing education credits every three years. BBRS also pointed out that the Massachusetts State Building Code is more stringent in fire protection, seismic standards, snow loads and also in the requirement for the oversight of building design and construction by registered engineers and architects. The BBRS requested that a comparison of all these issues be made with the "current" model codes and that Massachusetts communities be re-assessed.

ISO undertook an analysis of the Massachusetts State Building Code in early 2000 and on April 26, 2000 informed the BBRS that their review had been completed and that "... the Massachusetts State Building Code, Sixth Edition as amended, will be given maximum credit throughout the State". The only caveat is that ISO believes wind zone 3 as shown in Figure 1611.1C is weaker than the latest wind design requirements and this information will be provided to the Loads Advisory Committee for comment and response.

HEAT DETECTORS IN ONE AND TWO FAMILY DWELLINGS

While the State Building Code does not currently require heat detectors to be installed in a one or two family dwelling, owners may opt to install them provided that:

1. the detector(s) is(are) compatible with the other components of the fire alarm system and is(are) specifically listed as such, and;
2. the devices are listed to operate in the environments in which they are proposed to be installed.

"Listing" is a process by which devices are tested by nationally accredited laboratories in accordance with specific test standards and the results then "listed" in report form.

The State building Code establishes the minimum acceptable standards for construction. Building owners or designers are not precluded from voluntarily exceeding these requirements if they so choose.

TECHNICAL CODE COUNCIL CONVENES

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 143 Section 94 (f) provides for the establishment of an advisory board called the Technical Code Council (TCC): "...to assist in and make recommendations relative to formulation, promulgation and administration of the state building code."

The law further notes that..."the make-up of the TCC shall include a representative from each state department, commission, agency, board, or division concerned with the state building code, including specialized codes...and such other members as may be determined by the board (BBRS)."

Historically, the TCC, although meeting infrequently, has served an effective role in focussing discussion on such issues as "code collision" and has been well received by those who have participated in the past. Current issues on the TCC agenda include;

- Buzzer Lock" Law - MGL c.143 § 3R
- Sprinklering of Elevator Pits/Hoistways Machine Rooms (780 CMR Chapter 9)
- Elevator "Accessible Means of Egress" (§ 1007)
- Emergency Power for Fire Pumps - (Section 924.3)
- "Egress Lighting" Requirements (Section 1024)
- Building Code Requirements for Tents (Section 3104)
- Single Means of Egress From Residential Occupancies and Other Use Groups - (Section 1010)

As of May 30, 2000, Technical Code Council Meetings have been held regarding SPRINKLERING OF ELEVATOR PITS/HOISTWAYS/MACHINE ROOMS; EMERGENCY POWER FOR FIRE PUMPS, and; SINGLE MEANS OF EGRESS FROM RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCIES. The outcomes of these and other TCC scheduled efforts will be made available when work is completed.

CSL EXAMINATION SCHEDULES

Registration Deadline	Examination Date
August 11, 2000	September 9, 2000
November 10, 2000	December 9, 2001
February 9, 2001	March 10, 2001
May 11, 2001	June 9, 2001
August 10, 2001	September 8, 2001
November 9, 2001	December 8, 2001

COOPERATION

Written by David C. Holmes

District State Inspector Department of Public Safety
How well do you work with your local fire department officials? Do you agree on where smoke detectors should be placed in a single family home? Do you or the local fire official mark smoke or heat detector locations on plans? Does the fire official require installations of heat or smoke detectors that may violate their listing? Do you transmit plans to the fire official, as required by 780 CMR for construction control projects that involve Chapters 4, 9, or 34? Certain answers to these questions may indicate that a problem exists. So what can we do about this?

All public safety officials must apply the regulations under their respective jurisdictions in an equitable, uniform manner. If they do not, confusion and misinformation work against us all. Uniformity starts by being a good listener. Try scheduling some time with your local inspectors: electrical, plumbing, gas, fire, health, etc. on a regular basis to air and discuss various issues encountered in the field. Try to dispel mythological code interpretations by presenting facts. Be respectful of each other's strengths and weaknesses and varying job duties. These small-beginning steps can go a long way toward developing and maintaining a strong, cooperative team of code enforcement officials in your municipality.

Formerly, as an Inspector of Buildings, I recall individuals that attempted to "divide and conquer" by way of spreading miscommunications of one sort or another. Statements like, "Yeah, but the fire chief says, 'such and such'." were quickly dispatched by an immediate call to the fire chief. More often than not, the chief had been misquoted or misunderstood. Has that happened to you lately? Within minutes the issue was resolved or discovered to be non-existent! Ninety-nine percent of these problems are communication related and are merely perceptions generated by these

miscommunications. Jump on erroneous rumors and stamp them out.

What if the local fire official still does not agree with you on interpretation of 780 CMR? Everyone's entitled to their opinion, but not at the cost of the public trust. Contact me directly, as well as Timothee Rodrique (978) 567-3301 at the State Fire Marshal's Office. Why? We, as Public Safety Officials at the State level, must strive to bond and bind local inspectors together by providing consistent, accurate code interpretation and enforcement guidance. LET'S WORK TOGETHER ON THIS! This article also appeared in the March 2000 issue of DFS Quarterly

LIMITATIONS ON THE USE OF NFPA 13R AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEMS IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS FOR HEIGHT AND AREA INCREASES

by Carl C. Koslowski, P.E. (Fire Protection Engineer)

One of the Massachusetts State Building Code referenced standards for residential sprinkler systems is NFPA 13R, "Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in Residential Occupancies up to and Including Four Stories in Height". The scope of this standard, as outlined in NFPA 13R, includes the Residential Use Groups of 780 CMR. However, the general building limitations, Chapter 5 of 780 CMR, requires the use of a full NFPA 13 sprinkler system when increases in height and/or areas over the maximum permitted are sought.

Table 503 specifically limits building height and area for each use and type of construction. In many instances, an architect may increase the allowable building height or area by providing an automatic sprinkler system. In order to receive this building size allowance, the system must be installed in accordance with 906.2.1 (NFPA 13 only). There is no building size allowance credited for an NFPA 13R system.

There are important differences between NFPA 13 and 13R. Most notably, omission of sprinklers is allowed in several locations in a 13R system including; closets, concealed spaces, and attics. In summary, an NFPA 13R system is not allowed in a residential building if an area or height credit is taken under 780 CMR 504.2 or 506.3.

BBRS MEMBER PROFILE TIMOTHEE RODRIQUE



This edition of Codeword profiles Timothee Rodrique who is the State Fire Marshal's designee to the BBRS. Tim holds a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from University of Lowell and a Masters degree in fire protection engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Tim is currently Division Director of the Office of the State Fire Marshal. In addition to his regular duties on the BBRS Tim also serves on the State Building Code Appeals Board and the Construction Supervisor License Review Committee.

INSULATED CONCRETE FORMS (ICF) FOR CONCRETE FOUNDATIONS

Expanded polystyrene (EPS) concrete construction forms began appearing around the time of the 1970s oil embargoes.

Advantages for their use include the fact that they serve as permanent forms, eliminating the issue of early removal of formwork, prior to proper curing of concrete (however, the walls must be suitably braced - see Codeword article January 2000). Insulated Concrete Forms (ICFs) possess measurable insulation levels due to the nature of EPS, and are marketed as easy to assemble due to their "stackable", interlocking design.

Historically, when ICF manufacturers have approached the BBRS for approval of this product in Massachusetts, the BBRS has taken the position that no special approval is required, provided all applicable requirements of the State Building Code are met, and all manufacturer's installation requirements and any criteria established by Evaluation Reports, issued by any of the three (3) Model Building Code writing bodies are satisfied.

Included below is a suggested, "open-ended" checklist for Building Officials to use on projects using ICFs:

Typically, because of the use of the expanded polystyrene foam, ICFs should only be utilized in TYPE

5B construction, unless engineering evaluations and applicable fire-rated assembly testing information is provided which demonstrates compliance with other proposed CONSTRUCTION TYPES and/or applications where specific fire ratings are required by the Code.

The EPS inner insulated side of an ICF wall presents a fire hazard in buildings and must be protected with a fifteen (15) minute thermal barrier. Eexposed foam board walls on the building interior are not allowed (note that a 15 minute thermal barrier is not equivalent to a fire rating of the wall assembly). Any penetrations of the 15-minute thermal barrier must satisfy applicable Building Code requirements.

The ICF Manufacturer's Installation Manual should be provided to the Building Department at the time of building permit application as it will identify proper assembly.

ICFs may allow for less than eight (8) inch concrete wall thickness or design loads may dictate that engineering is required. Engineering documentation is required when

- a) the building design does not satisfy the prescriptive requirements of the Code or*
- b) where reinforcement is utilized,*
- c) when engineering calculations may otherwise be required.*

Where reinforcement is used, necessary reinforcement inspections should be performed.

National Model Building Code Evaluation Reports may be available for a particular Manufacturer's ICF. Where they are available, they are useful in providing guidance to the Building Department and builder relative to special precautions and/or inspections that may be required with a particular brand of ICF.

Generally, the method and rate at which concrete can be placed into such ICFs is controlled - ICFs are made of light-weight plastic material and typically held together with plastic tie members thus excessive placement rates or concentrating placement in a singular area of the formwork can result in structural failure ("blowing out") of the formwork during concrete placement - follow the Manufacturer's requirements! Because ICFs are made of a plastic material, waterproofing and/or damp-proofing materials must be chemically compatible with the EPS or other plastic material.

CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR LICENSE - DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

On April 7, 2000, hearings were held before the License Review Committee to determine appropriate actions against the Construction Supervisor for violations of the Massachusetts State Building Code and the following disciplinary actions were taken:

Name and Address	License Number	Action Taken
Mr. David Williams 110 Old Mansion Lane Whitman, MA 02382	65774	Letter of warning issued.
Edward Gerlach 114 Burt St. Taunton, MA 02780	72914	Suspended for 90 days effective 4/7/00 through 7/7/00 - must retest.
Shawn O'Brien 68 North Washington St. North Attleboro, MA 02760	64346	License revoked. Must take and pass exam. If he passes exam, a new license number can be issued after 6 months.

HOME IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION - DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

On Tuesday, March 28, 2000, the following Home Improvement Contractors were requested to appear before the Director of the HIC Program at a public hearing. The Home Improvement Contractor Hearings were held pursuant to M.G.L. 142A and 780CMR. The Director of the Home Improvement Contractor Registration Program issued the following decisions and administrative penalties.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON	NAME & ADDRESS	HIC #	ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY
James Shields	J & B Home Remodeling 93 Main Street Indian Orchard, MA 01151	120570	Suspended both registrations until the Guaranty Fund is paid in full and he pays the balance of the court judgement to the homeowners.
	Shields & Connors Enterprises 93 Main Street Indian Orchard, MA 01151	125175	
Marc Stanley	Stanley Home Remodeling 16 Reed Lane Bedford, MA 01730	116998	(Defaulted) Revoked and must reimburse the Guaranty Fund in full the amount paid on his behalf.
	Marc Stanley Home Remodeling, Inc. 43 Abbott Hill Road Wilton, NH 03086	109484	Assessed an administrative penalty in the amount of \$8,000 (\$2,000 per violation).
Neal Gooch	New Aqualine Pools 8 Gilmore Street Stoneham, MA 02180	123594	(Defaulted) Registration Revoked.
Brian Terry	Xavier, Inc 89 Massachusetts Avenue Boston, MA 02115	114387	(Defaulted) Registration Revoked
Robert Presti	Studio Kitchens, Inc. 225 Wildwood Avenue Woburn, MA 01801	115544	(Defaulted) Registration Revoked
Lewis Miller	John Mass Construction Corp. 30 Glenhill Road Mattapan, MA 02126	120075	Suspended until Guaranty Fund is reimbursed in full the amount paid on his behalf.
Ralph Woods	Ralph J. Woods Carpentry 15 Pine Grove Street Milton, MA 02186	115429	Suspended until Guaranty Fund is paid in full and must submit a new contract for approval before applying for reinstatement.
Brian Ekborg	Urban Craftsmen Contractors PO Box 520/ 276 Forest St S. Hamilton, MA 01970	120567	Suspended until penalty of \$1400 is paid and the Guaranty Fund is reimbursed in full any amount paid on his behalf.
Roger Karter	Deckorations 7 Maple Street Salem, MA 01970	120968	(Defaulted) Registration Revoked

HIC Disciplinary Actions - continued next page

RESPONSIBLE PERSON	NAME & ADDRESS	HIC #	ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY
William Brogna	Advanced Exteriors, Inc. 2 Winter Street Waltham, MA 02154	115678	(Defaulted) Registration Revoked
Ralph Pallone	Pilgrim Masonry 61 Webster Street Watertown, MA 02471	118477	(Defaulted) Registration Revoked
	Middlesex Contractors 61 Webster Street Watertown, MA 02471	126072	
Edmund Yu	E-Y General Contracting 88 Cross Street Malden, MA 02148	113709	(Defaulted) Registration Revoked
John Morelli	Morelli Custom Building 4 Spafford Street Milton, MA 02138	112312	Suspended until Guaranty Fund is paid in full.
James Mooers	Traditional Builders 370 Willow Avenue Bradford, MA 01835	107742	Reinstated once a payment schedule is agreed upon by Mr. Mooers and the Office of Consumer Affairs. If one payment is missed, a future hearing will be held to revoke the registration. Willow Enterprises, Inc may reapply with someone else as the responsible person.
	Willow Enterprises, Inc. PO Box 8344/ 99 Cross St Bradford, MA 01835	122629	
John Shanahan	Lynn Gutter & Roofing Co. 479 Broadway Lynn, MA 01904	117087	(Defaulted) Revoked and must reimburse the Guaranty Fund in full the amount paid on his behalf.

CAUTION ON THE USE OF WINDOW GUARDS OR SECURITY SCREENS IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Unless co-ordinated with life safety issues, well-intentioned security measures can sometimes have unintended effects on the life safety performance of a building. Consequently, the State Building Code closely controls the methods by which exit doors may be locked and the controls which must be in place in order to allow occupant escape under emergency conditions (see section 1017.4.1.2 "Special Locking Arrangements"). One of the country's most tragic fires occurred in Boston at the Coconut Grove Night club where exit doors were padlocked as a security measure costing 492 occupants their lives.

More recently, a fire at a dormitory occurred, causing some of the occupants to become trapped. The seemingly benign replacement of insect screens over sleeping room windows had unintended consequences. Apparently, because of concern for safety from entry from the outside of the building, insect screens were replaced with much more substantial woven mesh wire "security type" screens in aluminum frames. A fire occurred in the building, trapping some of the occupants in their upper floor sleeping rooms and, reportedly, fire

department rescue was hampered due to the substantial nature of the screens.

A note to building officials. When similar type screen replacements are planned in residential structures within your communities, please ensure that the screens comply with the provisions of emergency escape from sleeping rooms below the fourth story (Section 1010.4) when applicable. Section 1010.4 requires these screens to be releasable or removable from the inside without the use of a key, tool, or force greater than that required for normal operation of the window.

GOVERNOR CELLUCCI, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR SWIFT ANNOUNCE SPRINKLER PLAN FOR DORMITORIES

On June 9 Governor Paul Cellucci and Lieutenant Governor Swift announced a plan to increase safety on state college campuses by requiring fire sprinklers in state college dormitories built before the State Building Code required sprinklers in such buildings. Governor Cellucci and Lieutenant Governor Swift have committed to investing \$50 million over 5 years.

"While our current building codes require the installation of fire sprinklers in new dormitories, we must address those dormitories built prior to the new rules", said Lieutenant Governor Swift.

WELCOME HEATHER, SHANDA, KIM, JULIE AND DEIRDRE

The BBRs and staff extend a warm welcome to new (and not so new) staff members Heather McEwan, Shanda Carter, Kim Spencer, Julie Merrett and student intern Deirdre Kelly.

Heather, a graduate of St. Anselms College (English) is working in the Home Improvement Contractor and Construction Supervisor Programs. In her spare time, Heather enjoys theater and travelling.

Kim joined the BBRs in December 1999 and her primary duties include processing Codeword subscriptions and renewals and administrative duties for the building official certification program. Kim's prior experience includes a four-year tour of duty in the U.S. Navy. In her spare time Kim enjoys traveling and outdoor activities with her husband and two children.

Julie joined the BBRs in March 2000 as an administrative assistant and brings experience as owner/partner of a small food service coffee shop for many years. Julie also worked in administrative office work at a medical office and as a corporate/litigation secretary for a Boston Law Firm. Julie's interests include running, reading, music and cooking.

Shanda is an administrative assistant in the Home Improvement Contractor Registration Program.

Deirdre attends Fairfield University majoring in communications. She will be working in the Home Improvement Contractor Registration program and hopes to gain a lot from the experience.

NEW NON-RESIDENTIAL ENERGY CODE FREE SEMINARS

Here is a reminder that the revision to Chapter 13 of the Building Code is scheduled to take effect in January 2001. This change will entirely replace the current Chapter 13, including the stringency, format, and administrative requirements. BBRs has been holding seminars since February, with over 900 building officials, architects, engineers, contractors, designers & others having attended so far. The series continues through December, and we encourage everyone who works on new "commercial" buildings to attend. The seminars are free, and continuing education credits are awarded to Massachusetts building officials, and to AIA members. Register at www.state.ma.us/bbrs/register.htm or by calling 617-951-1433 ext. 323.

ENERGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAS NEW CHAIRMAN

The Energy Advisory Committee wishes to extend its thanks and best wishes to the outgoing chairman, Nick Johnson, P.E., of BR+A Engineering, Boston. Nick led the EAC through its review and formulation of both the low-rise residential energy code in 1997 (Appendix J,) and the revisions to Chapter 13 over the past two years. Nick will remain active as a member of the EAC.

Stepping into the position of Chairman is Wagdy Anis, R.A. Wagdy is Head of Technical Resources and a Principal with Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott of Boston. He is a recognized international leader in the fields of energy efficient design and indoor air quality, and led the task force in the development of the envelope provisions of the new Chapter 13. Welcome!

REMAINING ENERGY CODE SEMINARS

ENVELOPE			HVAC			LIGHTING/POWER		
City	Date	Time	City	Date	Time	City	Date	Time
Boston	7/20	8:30 AM	Andover	7/12	8:30 AM	Andover	7/12	1:00 PM
Wareham	7/26	1:00 PM	Boston	7/20	1:00 PM	Wareham	7/26	8:30 AM
Needham	8/16	8:30 AM	Yarmouth	8/1	8:30 AM	Yarmouth	8/1	1:00 PM
Cambridge	8/22	1:00 PM	Needham	8/16	1:00 PM	Cambridge	8/22	8:30 AM
Yarmouth	9/20	8:30 AM	Northborough	9/12	8:30 AM	Northborough	9/12	1:00 PM
Boston	9/26	1:00 PM	Yarmouth	9/20	1:00 PM	Boston	9/26	8:30 AM
Northborough	10/12	8:30 AM	Billerica	10/2	8:30 AM	Billerica	10/2	1:00 PM
W. Springfield	10/18	1:00 PM	Northborough	10/12	1:00 PM	W. Springfield	10/18	8:30 AM
Andover	10/31	8:30 AM	Boston	10/24	8:30 AM	Boston	10/24	1:00 PM
Boston	11/9	1:00 PM	Andover	10/31	1:00 PM	Boston	11/9	8:30 AM
Peabody	11/30	8:30 AM	Andover	11/15	8:30 AM	Andover	11/15	1:00 PM
Boston	12/6	1:00 PM	Peabody	11/30	1:00 PM	Boston	12/6	8:30 AM

PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING ANSWERS TO BUILDING CODE QUESTIONS

The BBRS requests that all code users use the following established procedures for building code questions:

1. Seek the answer from the building official in the locality where the project is (or will be) located.
2. If the building official cannot answer the question request the building official to seek guidance from the DISTRICT STATE BUILDING INSPECTOR for the jurisdiction. The District Inspector is available to the Building Official for consultation.

The BBRS asks that Building Officials do not instruct the public to call the BBRS staff or the District State Inspector as, generally, they are disadvantaged by not having access to the actual building or issue at hand and therefore are may inadvertently misinterpret the situation and provide an incorrect opinion. Formal (or Official) interpretations are reserved for the BBRS after formal written request. Formal interpretations make take some time as the response must first be researched by technical staff and approved by the BBRS at a regular monthly meeting. It is not uncommon for an initial interpretation to be sent back to the staff for additional review, which must then be resubmitted at the next Board meeting. Formal Interpretations cannot be made on building specific projects.



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