Inspections Newsletter

Winter 2017 Issue

From the desk of the Plumbing Inspector.

By **Mike LaPrade**

It is quickly becoming that time of year when temperatures drop and cold weather is upon us. Many property owners do not properly insulate and protect their water piping systems and that can result in FROZEN PIPES. With frozen pipes, ruptures can occur in the piping causing loss of water and high utility bills.

The City of Danville will allow for adjustment of the utility bill due to this type of failure but the process is very specific. As a contractor working for the customer you can help them recoup a portion of their loss.

The procedure for reimbursement is located on the City of Danville web page at the bottom of the page under the **Helpful Hints** section , click on Code of Ordinances then scroll down and click on: Chapter 38 Utilities. Sec. 38-48. - Credit in case of certain water leaks.

This code explains to process for adjustment for an excessive loss of water due to an Undetectable Water leak on your or a customer's property. I would highly recommend all Contractors and homeowners to look this code up and read it. If possible, print a copy of the code for reference to hand to your customers when such failure of the water piping occurs. This will greatly ease the process for the Inspections division and save valuable time for Customer service when processing the adjustment request.

Please remember to close up those air vents in your foundation walls. Secure access doors to your crawl spaces close up any opening which air can move through and unhook that garden hose. Let us have a Freeze free season!

Below is the direct link to the section:

https://library.municode.com/va/danville/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICO_CH38UTSE_ARTIIISECH_S38-48CRCACEWALE

TID BITS:

Energy Conservation

By David Cockran

As winter approaches, it is time to check out dwelling for air leakage and insure our attics and crawl spaces have proper insulation values. This will reduce energy consumption and provide a more energy efficient dwelling thus reducing utility cost.

HVAC Insulation

By Richard Phelps

Duct insulation for Residential

Supply ducts installed in attics shall be insulated to a minimum of R-8. All other duct shall be insulated to a minimum R-6.

Exception: Ducts or portions thereof located completely inside the building thermal envelope.

Duct insulation for Commercial

All supply and return ducts and plenums shall be insulated with a minimum of R-6 insulation where located in unconditioned spaces and a minimum of R-8 insulation where located outside the building. Where located within a building envelope assembly, the duct or plenum shall be separated from the building exterior, unconditioned, or exempt spaces by a minimum of R-8 insulation.

Exceptions:

Where located within equipment.
Where the design temperature difference between the interior and exterior of the duct or plenum does not exceed 15 F (8C).

It is turning colder outside

By John Thompson

It is that time again when the temperature drops and a chill is in the air. Some people like to add just a little extra warmth in the room they are in without turning up the thermostat and raising the temperature of the whole house. In most cases, using portable electric heaters instead of raising the thermostat up a degree is actually less energy efficient.

However if you do chose to use portable electric heaters, here are a few helpful tips to make sure that you do so safely.

Make sure that the receptacle outlet that you are using to power the heater is in good condition and the attachment plug fits tightly into the receptacle. The plug should not sag or drop out of the receptacle.

Remember that these heaters are for temporary use, do not substitute portable plug in heaters for a permanent heat source.

Do not leave the heater unattended. If you leave the room, turn off the heater and unplug it from the receptacle.

Do not overload the receptacle outlet or the circuit that supplies the outlet. It is recommended that electric heaters only be operated on a 20 amp. circuit. If the cord, plug, or circuit breaker shows any sign of heating, discontinue use of the heater and have the circuit checked by a licensed electrician.

Cold Weather Construction

By William Willis

Construction works does not stop just because it gets cold during the winter.

OSHA's cold stress card provides a reference guide and recommendations to combat and prevent many cold weather-related illnesses and injuries.

The following are tips on how to protect yourself from the cold:

- Recognize the environmental and workplace conditions that may be dangerous.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of cold-induced illnesses and injuries and what to do to help employees.
- Train employees about cold-induced illnesses and injuries.
- Encourage employees to wear proper clothing for cold, wet and windy conditions, including layers that can be adjusted to changing conditions.
- Be sure that employees in extremely cold conditions take frequent, short breaks in warm dry shelters to allow their bodies to warm up.
- Try to schedule work for the warmest part of the day.
- Avoid exhaustion or fatigue because energy is needed to keep muscles warm.
- Use the buddy system: Work in pairs so that one employee can recognize danger signs.
- Drink warm, sweet beverages (sugar water, sports-type drinks) and avoid drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, sodas or hot chocolate) or alcohol.
- Eat warm, high-calorie foods such as hot pasta dishes.
- Remember that employees increase their risks when they take certain medications, are in poor physical condition or suffer from illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension or cardiovascular disease.

Announcements:

Over the past couple of years our office started asking for digital copies of plans to accompany the hard copies for review. The digital copies were mainly for storage reasons as we are almost at capacity in our plan vault.

It has always been our future planning to completely go paperless for the review process. This is becoming more of a reality as we have recently installed a 50" monitor and small computer in our review room to review the plans. With our permitting software, internet and outlook installed on the computer we will be able to review the plans and correspond to the applicant all in one space.

The future plans will be to go completely digital, as for the present will be requiring a digital copy to accompany the hard copy of all plans for review, building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing.

Did You Know?

By Staff

A little known or often forgotten fact in the construction industry is the requirement of an asbestos inspection prior to any renovation or demolition unless certain exemptions are met. This requirement is not limited to building; it also encompasses the electrical, mechanical, and plumbing trades. Typically the most affected areas usually deal with building, mechanical and plumbing.

Some of the more common examples in construction that one may encounter during renovation or demolition are fire-retardant coating, acoustical ceiling textures (popcorn ceilings), fireproof drywall, asbestos flooring, flooring adhesives, shingles, siding, pipe insulation and duct insulation.

Section 110.3 of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) references the Code of Virginia, Section 36-99.7 requiring the local building department *not to issue a building permit* until the local building department receives certification the building has been inspected or meets the exemptions and complies with the State Code.

Exemptions from inspection are listed below:

- **The building permit for the original construction of the building listed above was issued after January 1, 1985; therefore, the building is not subject to asbestos certification requirements.**
- **Single-family dwelling, or is a residential building containing four or fewer dwelling units, which will not be used either as a commercial building or as a public development project, and is, therefore, exempt from asbestos inspection requirements.**
- **The combined amount of regulated asbestos-containing material involved in the renovation or demolition is less than 260 linear feet on pipes, or less than 160 square feet on other facility components, or less than 35 cubic feet off facility components where length or area could not be measured previously, and is, therefore, exempt from asbestos inspection requirements.**
- **The affected portions of the above building have been inspected for the presence of asbestos by an individual licensed to perform such inspections pursuant to Code of Virginia Section 54.1-503 and that no asbestos-containing materials were found.**
- **The affected portions of the above building have been inspected for the presence of asbestos by an individual licensed to perform such inspections pursuant to Code of Virginia Section 54.1-503 and that appropriate response actions will be undertaken with the requirements of NESHAPS (40 CFR61, SUBPART M) and the asbestos worker requirements established by OSHA (29 CFR1926.1101).**
- **The building permit application is only for repair or replacement of roofing, floor covering, or siding materials. The materials to be repaired or replaced are assumed to contain friable asbestos and the appropriate response actions will be accomplished by a licensed asbestos contractor or a licensed asbestos roofing, flooring, siding contractor (THIS OPTION IS NOT PERMITTED FOR SCHOOLS PER VUSBC 110.3)**

An abatement area shall not be reoccupied until the building official receives certification from the owner that the response actions have been completed and final clearances have been measured.

The following link is where you can find and download an Asbestos Certification form on our web page:
http://www.danville-va.gov/476/Forms-Applications

Link to the Code of Virginia; 36-99 Asbestos inspection in buildings to be renovated or demolished; exceptions:
https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title36/chapter6/section36-99.7/