

BBS MEMO

Ohio Board of Building Standards

February 26, 1996

2323 West Fifth Ave., Box 825, Columbus, Ohio 43216

THE SEAL LAW - APPLYING THE RULES IN BUILDING DEPARTMENTS

Since the November 24, 1995 effective date of HB 231 (the Seal Law), members of the legislature have been deluged with phone calls and letters from their constituents. Ohio House members involved in the development of this Bill called a special meeting with interested parties last week in an effort to eliminate incorrect application of the provisions by clarifying the intent of the statute. At the meeting, the legislators stated that *this bill was not intended to authorize a building department to require a seal on all documents submitted for review to determine compliance with the OBBC*. Representatives Tiberi and Schuring requested that BBS staff send to each building department a memo to be used as a guideline for determining when a seal is required.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

For those construction documents required to be sealed, the building official simply checks to see that there is a seal on those drawings. The building official does not determine whether it should be an architect or engineer preparing the documents. *Those plans that are required to be sealed*, and are submitted with an architect's or an engineer's seal shall be accepted for review to determine compliance with the OBBC. If site plans are required to be sealed, a landscape architect's seal also shall be accepted when appearing on site plans showing building location, grading, roadways, exterior site details and areas (see §4703.31 ORC).

WHEN A SEAL IS REQUIRED

Construction documents include design, and the location and physical characteristics of construction. *Whenever the preparation of construction documents requires technical analysis*, the documents must be sealed by a registered design professional. Based upon a technical analysis, the registered design professional specifies the performance of a system necessary within the building to meet the needs of the owner/occupant and those necessary to meet the requirements of the OBBC.

NO SEAL IS REQUIRED

There are instances when documents provide location and descriptions of physical characteristics of the construction independent of technical analysis/design, and those documents can be submitted for review without requiring a seal. Shop drawings, cut/spec sheets and listings are obvious examples of documents that can be submitted for review but would not require a seal. The following provide guidelines to be used when applying 4101:2-1-20; architects and engineers seals *are not required* on documents submitted to building departments for:

1. Documents submitted for any 1, 2 or 3 family dwellings including those accessory structures such as a garage, greenhouse, shed, etc. not used for commercial purposes;
2. Documents submitted for energy conservation design of 1, 2 and 3-family dwellings;
3. Automatic sprinkler system designs submitted under the signature of an individual certified in accordance with paragraph (d) of rule 4101:2-1-22 of the Administrative Code;

4. Documents submitted for installation of replacement devices, equipment or systems that are equivalent in type and design to the replaced devices, equipment, or systems, including new equipment that meets the required performance characteristics of the original equipment. Examples include removal/replacement of structural members (headers, etc.) when the new member has equal or greater loadbearing characteristics, and HVAC units providing equivalent or greater efficiency ratings and meeting the original design heating/cooling/electrical loads;
5. Documents submitted for any buildings or structures subject to the OBBC where the building official determines that the proposed work does not involve technical analysis/design, include:
 - a. **GENERAL CONSTRUCTION** drawings for details of alterations or limited new construction when the design is already clear or preestablished. Examples include the location and type of a protected opening in a rated assembly when the rating of the assembly is known, details for installation or relocation of interior partitions when the original design parameters have not been changed.
 - b. **STRUCTURAL** systems that are not modified, where any new load applied to the structural system can be shown to have been accounted for as part of the original design. Examples include: a floor assembly where the load imposed by the new use does not exceed the original design capacity; replacement of one type of rooftop equipment where the weight of the new equipment does not exceed the original design load;
 - c. **PRE-ENGINEERED LISTED/APPROVED** equipment drawings or cut sheets that meet the specifications and performance requirements of the code; such as listed commercial range hood.
 - d. Full scope, newly constructed **FIRE PROTECTION** systems which are required by the OBBC must bear the seal of a design professional or a certified sprinkler designer for water sprinkler systems. Drawings submitted for the installation of new non-required fire protection systems (per Section 901.3 of the OBBC), and alterations to existing systems that can be made without exceeding the capacity of the system do not require the seal of a design professional or signature of a certified fire sprinkler designer for water sprinkler systems. Examples include extending existing fire alarm systems into additions when the original design limits of the system are not exceeded, or the installation of a single-head limited area sprinkler system in a boiler room.
 - e. HVAC drawings submitted for the installation of replacement equipment or equipment that constitutes an upgrade for an existing system that does not exceed the system's capacities, or an increase in energy demand because of other alterations. If the original design of the system accounted for the increased load or can be shown to accommodate the new configuration or load, the seal of a design professional is not required.
 - f. **ELECTRICAL** drawings which provide sufficient information describing work that does not increase the load on the electrical load center, does not require the seal of a design professional. Adding a circuit to an existing panel or a new subpanel which does not increase the demand on the original service does not require the seal of a design professional. Temporary service for construction purposes does not require the seal of a design professional.
 - g. **PLUMBING** drawings describing additional fixtures or other alterations to the system when the system's capacity can be shown to account for such increases/changes.

4. Documents submitted for installation of replacement devices, equipment or systems that are equivalent in type and design to the replaced devices, equipment, or systems, including new equipment that meets the required performance characteristics of the original equipment. Examples include removal/replacement of structural members (headers, etc.) when the new member has equal or greater loadbearing characteristics, and HVAC units providing equivalent or greater efficiency ratings and meeting the original design heating/cooling/electrical loads;

5. Documents submitted for any buildings or structures subject to the OBBC where the building official determines that the proposed work does not involve technical analysis/design, include:
 - a. GENERAL CONSTRUCTION drawings for details of alterations or limited new construction when the design is already clear or preestablished. Examples include the location and type of a protected opening in a rated assembly when the rating of the assembly is known, details for installation or relocation of interior partitions when the original design parameters have not been changed.
 - b. STRUCTURAL systems that are not modified, where any new load applied to the structural system can be shown to have been accounted for as part of the original design. Examples include: a floor assembly where the load imposed by the new use does not exceed the original design capacity; replacement of one type of rooftop equipment where the weight of the new equipment does not exceed the original design load;
 - c. PRE-ENGINEERED LISTED/APPROVED equipment drawings or cut sheets that meet the specifications and performance requirements of the code; such as listed commercial range hood.
 - d. Full scope, newly constructed FIRE PROTECTION systems which are required by the OBBC must bear the seal of a design professional or a certified sprinkler designer for water sprinkler systems. Drawings submitted for the installation of new non-required fire protection systems (per Section 901.3 of the OBBC), and alterations to existing systems that can be made without exceeding the capacity of the system do not require the seal of a design professional or signature of a certified fire sprinkler designer for water sprinkler systems. Examples include extending existing fire alarm systems into additions when the original design limits of the system are not exceeded, or the installation of a single-head limited area sprinkler system in a boiler room.
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 - f. ELECTRICAL drawings which provide sufficient information describing work that does not increase the load on the electrical load center, does not require the seal of a design professional. Adding a circuit to an existing panel or a new subpanel which does not increase the demand on the original service does not require the seal of a design professional. Temporary service for construction purposes does not require the seal of a design professional.
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