
BBS MEMO

o Board of Building Standards

March 3, 1998

6606 Tussing Road, P.O. Box 4009, Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068-9009

Ohio Building, Mechanical, and Plumbing Codes Effective Date and Plumbing Code Transition Period

Approximately every three years the Board of Building Standards (BBS) updates the construction codes used in Ohio. This updating follows the release of new versions of model codes by the promulgating organization; in Ohio this is Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc. (BOCA). Therefore the BBS has, after completing the ORC section 119 process, assigned 1 March 1998 as the effective date for the new Ohio Basic Building Code, the Ohio Mechanical Code, and the Ohio Plumbing Code. Given that the building and mechanical codes have been based upon model code documents since 1979, the changes to them with this update are not unusually large given the common code format change that happened at the last code cycle. The plumbing code will, for the first time, be based upon a model code document. This change makes the Board's mandatory plumbing inspector training very significant as the effective date draws near.

A complication has occurred which delayed publishing the codes and has made it more difficult to obtain these codes in printed form. The delay in publishing was primarily caused by the negotiation of agreements for publishing rights between West Law Publishing (Banks-Baldwin's parent company) and the International Codes Council (holders of the model code copyright). Various organizations in the industry have expressed to the Board that availability of codes and training for designers, technicians, and tradespeople must precede uniform use of this updated plumbing code.

To resolve this problem, the Board will therefore follow a precedent established in 1979 when Ohio discontinued use of the state developed Ohio Building Code (OBC) and adopted the model-code-based Ohio Basic Building Code (OBBC). A transition period was implemented to allow the use of either the OBC or the OBBC for a period of several months. Likewise, a transition period is reasonable for the adoption of a model-code-based plumbing code. Because any plumbing system designed under the current OPC would comply with the new OPC, there should consequently be no issue of safety. This approach to meeting the industry's needs for training and published documents without compromising safety or sanitation in buildings is within the scope of the Board's responsibilities.

Therefore, this BBSMemo is a notification to all certified building departments that there will be a transition period from the effective date of the OPC (1 March 1998) until 1 September 1998 during which time either the previous version of the OPC or the new model-code-based OPC can be used as the basis for the design and installation of plumbing systems. This transition period applies only to the Ohio Plumbing Code and not the Ohio Basic Building code or the Ohio Mechanical Code.

Any questions can be addressed to the Board of Building Standards, 6606 Tussing Road, P.O. Box 4009, Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068-9009.