

# INSPECTIONS & ZONING UPDATE

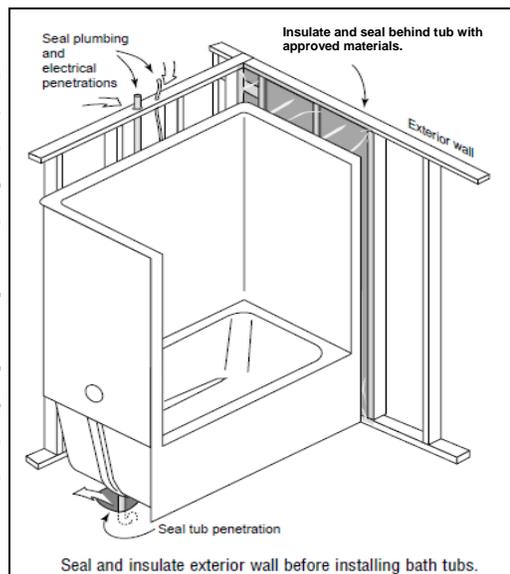
Volume 6 Issue 1

Spring 2010

BUILDING CODE & ZONING NEWS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT CATAWBA COUNTY

## Air Sealing Behind Tubs and Showers

Air leakage in new homes greatly effects the energy efficiency. The 2009 NC Energy Conservation Code addresses this area as mandatory for compliance. Section 402.4 .1 states **“The building thermal envelope shall be durably sealed to limit infiltration. The sealing methods between dissimilar materials shall allow for differential expansion and contraction. The following shall be caulked, gasketed, weather-stripped or otherwise sealed with an air barrier material, suitable film or solid material.”**



Ten areas are listed in the code to be air sealed with tubs and showers at number 8 on the list. Only those tubs and showers installed on an exterior wall are required to be air sealed under this section. In the illustration, one can see the amount of area exposed for air leakage with a common tub/shower unit. The shaded area requires an approved air barrier to be in compliance with this section of the 2009 NC Energy Conservation Code. Examples of approved air barriers are; house wraps, plywood, drywall, rigid foam insulation, sheet metal and 6 mil polyethylene plastic.

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## Plan Review Code News

The year 2010 has brought several significant changes to The Plan Review Department. Perhaps the greatest change involves the Adoption of ICC/ANSI A117.1-2003 by the State of North Carolina. Gone are the days of referring to North Carolina Volume I-C. Now accessibility is governed by NCBC Chapters 10, 11, 34, Appendix E, and the North Carolina Re-Hab Code. These documents tell us what has to be done, and ANSI A117.1 tells us how to do it. There aren't many differences in the way things need to be designed however, perhaps the most significant change is the new requirement for vertical grab bars in toilet areas. Vertical grab bars were not required under the previous code, and this has led to some confusion in recent weeks.

Chapter Six of ICC/ANSI A117 details the requirements for Plumbing Elements and Facilities. Article 604.5.1, deals with Fixed Side Wall Grab Bars. Along with the requirement for a 42 inch minimum side wall Grab bar at an accessible toilet location is a new requirement for an 18 inch vertical side wall grab bar. Provided below is an excerpt from ICC/ANSI 177.1, detailing this requirement.

If you have any questions regarding the changes to the accessibility requirements of the building code, please feel free to contact Plan Review supervisor Brandon Lewis at 828-466-5130 extension #1.

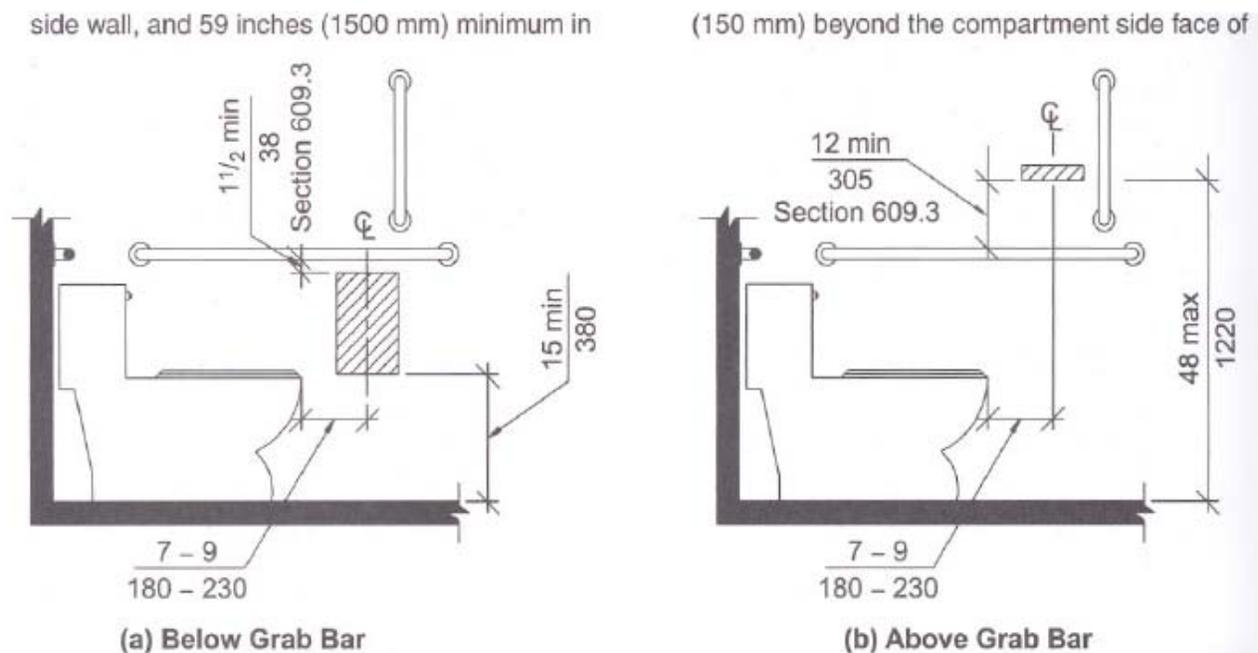


Fig. 604.7  
Dispenser Location

## Electrical Code News

Extension cords can deliver electrical power to where its needed. But when used improperly, they can also become electrical hazards.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that approximately 3,000 people are injured each year due to improper use of extension cords. The CPSC also reports that some 5,000 residential fires annually are caused by faulty extension cords. The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) offers the following safety tips to prevent shock and fire hazards.

- Remember, extension cords are intended only for temporary use.
- Never run extension cords thru walls, under rugs/carpet or across a doorway.
- Always replace a damaged extension cord in lieu of trying to repair it.
- Never overload an extension cord. If the cord feels warm to the touch, it is drawing too much power and could cause a shock or fire hazard.
- Never cut off the ground pin in order to connect to a 2-wire extension cord or receptacle. Always use a UL-listed adapter for this purpose.
- Always use cords with polarized plugs where one prong is wider than the other.
- When disconnecting an extension cord, pull from the plug, not the cord itself.
- When buying an extension cord, always check to ensure that the cord has been listed and labeled by a nationally recognized third party laboratory, such as Under-writers Laboratories (UL) or Canadian Standards Association (CSA).
- Always use special heavy-duty extension cords for high-wattage appliances such as air conditioners, portable electric heaters and freezers.
- Outside the home always use extension cords designed for outdoor use.



## Mechanical Code News

Kitchens in single family homes today have come a long way from the free standing simple four burner range with oven. The kitchens today have multiple permanent appliances installed for a variety of different cooking options for fast paced living. We now have options of convection or conventional ovens or both in the same unit. Another option is vastly improved microwave ovens which can cook in half the time and have various other features such as browning of foods and even baking. All of these options have left the general public with many decisions on placement of these appliances to best meet their needs. So as the need arises for more appliances in the kitchen, the code has amended itself with the addition of more circuits and more area to maintain proper clearances for these appliances.

The North Carolina Mechanical Code prohibits the installation of listed commercial cooking appliances in single and two family dwellings. However, domestic appliances used in dwellings are required to be listed and labeled for their use. Appliances that are labeled for commercial use have higher temperature ratings and less insulating components in their design. This is due in part to their intended location and the limited number of combustibile materials surrounding them in a commercial kitchen.

The installation of microwave ovens installed above other cooking appliances has also become very popular in kitchens today. In the past, microwaves were considered more of a portable appliance as opposed to being built in place. These appliances do need proper clearances to combustibles as well as clearances from other appliances that may be located adjacent to or above. The Mechanical code requires when a listed and labeled cooking appliance is located above another cooking appliance the installation instructions conform to the upper appliance. These requirements are very important and must be followed in order to maintain safe clearances from combustibile materials.

The end result is to always follow the manufacturers installation instructions when installing a cooking appliance.



## Permit Center News

Permits Issued from December 2009 through February 2010: The Catawba County Permit Center issued a total of 1,549 permits in this quarter, with a total cost of construction of \$257,459,768.00. There were 29 new single-family dwelling permits issued during this same time period. A few of the larger projects were: Hickory High School Renovation, Lowes Food's Store, and Penelope Baptist Church.

Permit Center Software: Catawba County Permit Center is now ONLINE. We have a new website that will allow you to view reports and conduct searches from the Permit Center database. These reports include all active permits/cases, Inspections that are scheduled/completed, Permit Detail information, and inspection history for a permit. You are now able to search permit information by contractor, address, or Parcel Number. Once you have accessed a report or search, you will be able to print the information or view it online. While viewing the data you will see some of the information such as building permit number, parcel number, etc. in blue letters. This is a hyperlink that you can click that will take you to a more detailed report about that information. You will often find additional hyperlinks in the detailed report that will take you even further into the information. These reports can be found on the Building Services Website at <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/depts/u&e/building.asp>. Once on the Building Services website, the reports can be accessed by pressing the big button called "Reports and Miscellaneous Items". Then click "Building Services and Permit Center Reports".

From the Building Services Website, you can also access the "Contractors Access Portal". This "Portal" will allow a contractor (Contractor's only) to view their permit information and schedule inspections online for each permit type. However, due to some programming issues that we are still working on, the only permits you will be able to schedule online will be for a permit that has already been paid for in full. If you have a billing account with Catawba County and the permit has not been marked as paid in the computer system, the programming will not allow inspections to be scheduled online and you will have to contact the Permit Center or go through the IVR (Interactive Voice Response system) to schedule the inspection. We hope to have this issue corrected in the near future.



## Armin Wallner Retires after 21 years of Service

Armin Wallner was honored at a retirement reception on February 26, 2010 at the County's Government Center. Catawba County Manager Tom Lundy noted that "Armin's leadership and personality have been integral" in the successful merger between Catawba County and the City of Hickory Building Inspections in 2003. Mr. Lundy also presented Armin with a paperweight engraved with his name and years of service.

"Armin's leadership was invaluable during the Building Services merger with the City of Hickory" said Barry Edwards, Director of Utilities and Engineering. "His attention to detail made the transition easier for all parties involved, including contractors. He will be truly missed." Barry presented Armin with a plaque from the Utilities and Engineering Department in recognition of his 21 years of service and dedication to the citizens of Catawba County.

Armin came to Catawba County Government through the 2003 Building Inspection merger with the City of Hickory where he served as Chief of Inspections. Throughout Armin's 21-year career with local government, he has been involved in building inspections, fire departments, minimum housing standards and community development. His hands on management of inspections, construction plan review, permitting, planning and zoning have worked to enhance the economic development of Catawba County.

Armin currently serves as President of the Professional Construction Estimators Association, and is a member of the Hickory/Catawba County Home Builders Association, the National Fire Protection Association, the International Code Council, and the Building Services Advisory Committee.

Armin was born and raised in Long Island, New York, but has lived in North Carolina since 1985. He is married to Colleen, has two daughters, Vanessa and Amber, and one granddaughter, Sophia.



## Local Government Contacts

### Catawba County Planning & Zoning

Ph. 828-465-8380 / Fax 828-465-8484

### Catawba County Fire Marshall

Ph. 828-465-8230 / Fax 828-464-4820

### Catawba County Environmental Health

Ph. 828-465-8270 / Fax 828-465-8276

### Catawba County Erosion Control

Ph. 828-465-8161

### Catawba County Permit Centers

Ph. 828-465-8399

Fax 828-465-8962 *Newton* / Fax 828-322-6814 *Hickory*

### City of Claremont Zoning

Ph. 828-459-7009 / Fax 828-459-0596

### City of Claremont Fire Department

Ph. 828-459-9296

### City of Conover Zoning

Ph. 828-464-1191 / Fax 828-465-5177

### City of Conover Fire

Ph. 828-464-1295 / Fax 828-464-1253

### City of Hickory DAC/Zoning

Ph. 828-323-7556 / Fax 828-323-7474

### City of Hickory Fire

Ph. 828-322-7522 / Fax 828-323-7476

### City of Newton Zoning

Ph. 828-465-7400 / Fax 828-465-7412

### City of Newton Fire

Ph. 828-695-4284 / Fax 828-465-7453

### Town of Brookford Zoning

Ph. 828-322-4903

### Town of Catawba Zoning

Ph. 828-241-2215 \ Fax 828-241-9968

### Town of Catawba Fire Inspections

Contact County Fire Marshal's Office

### Town of Longview Zoning

Ph. 828-322-3921 / Fax 828-322-1567

### Town of Longview Fire Inspections

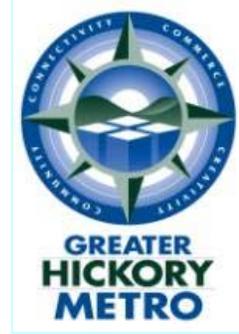
Contact County Fire Marshal's Office

### Town of Maiden Zoning

Ph. 828-428-5007 / Fax 828-428-5017

### Town of Maiden Fire Inspections

Contact County Fire Marshal's Office



## CATAWBA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

### Building Services Division

100-A SW Blvd

PO Box 389

Newton, NC 28658-0389

**For additional information regarding building codes and services in Catawba County please visit the Catawba County website at <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/depts/u&e/building.asp>**

**For additional assistance please contact the following personnel:**

Joel Herman, Interim Chief Building Services Official  
828. 312.5713 or [joelh@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:joelh@catawbacountync.gov)

Brandon Lewis, Plan Review Supervisor  
828.217.0463 or [Blewis@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:Blewis@catawbacountync.gov)

David Smith, Permit Center Supervisor  
828.217.3037 or [dsmith@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:dsmith@catawbacountync.gov)

Reid Goforth, Eastern Area Supervisor  
828.312.5709 or [reid@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:reid@catawbacountync.gov)

Jeff Hinkle, Western Area Supervisor  
828.217.1034 or [Jhinkle@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:Jhinkle@catawbacountync.gov)