Interpretations

Of

The

1987 USBC

Interpretation 1/87

Issued February 22, 1988
Section 708.1, USBC referencing BOCA 1984 and 1987 Editions

Q. Does a storage area in the basement of a R-3 dwelling unit have a minimum ceiling height?

A. No.

Interpretation 2/87

Issued February 22, 1988
Sections 816.5 and 816.5.1.3, USBC referencing BOCA 1984 and 1987 Editions

Q. Must interior stair handrails in R-3 dwelling units be constructed from the nosing of the first tread to the nosing of the last tread?

Section 816.5 state continuous but mentions no specifics as to starting and ending. Decorative colonial railing do not typically run from nosing to nosing.

A. Handrails in R-3 dwelling units shall begin at the first riser at the bottom of the flight of stairs and continue to the top of the last riser.

Interpretation 3/87

Issued April 22, 1988
Section 100.6(3), USBC/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Is it the intent of Section 100.6(3) of the 1987 Edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code to negate the enforcement of Section 2700.4 of the 1987 Edition of BOCA and Sections 90-6, 110-3(a) and (b) and definition "Listed and Labeled" of the 1987 Edition of the National Electrical Code?

Q. (2) Define what constitutes manufacturing and processing machines and equipment?

A. (1) Yes. (for manufacturing and processing only)

A. (2) Manufacturing and processing machines and equipment are those used to make or produce goods or finished products, usually from raw materials, in a factory, work-place, or other industrial type operation. Some examples of such machinery and equipment are tobacco processing equipment, mills and calenders in the rubber and plastic industries, presses, forging machines, cutting machines, dies, welding and brazing equipment, and woodworking equipment such as saws, planners, gang-nail presses, lathes, etc.

Comment: Machines and equipment in the workplace are regulated by the Virginia OSHA Standards administered by the Department of Labor and Industry.

Interpretation 4/87

Issued April 22, 1988
Section 812.2, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Section 812.2 requires two independent means of egress when the occupant load is more than 50 or in which the travel distance exceeds 75 feet. Should the 75 foot travel distance be measured to the exit? Or can it be measured to the exit access corridor entrance, even if only one exit is provided from the exit access corridor? Should the 75 foot travel distance be measured to a point where there is a choice of two egress paths?

A. The 1984 BOCA Basic/National Building Code, Section 812.2, is written to state when any room or space is required to have two doorways. The travel distance referred to is that distance within the room to one doorway. The arrangement of corridors and exits beyond the doorway, and the total egress travel distance requirements to the building exit will not alter this requirement. These issues are part of other code sections.

Interpretation 5/87

Issued April 22, 1988
Section 812.2, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Section 812.2 requires two independent means of egress when the occupant load is more than 50 or in which the travel distance exceeds 75 feet. Should the 75 foot travel distance be measured from the most remote point with no exceptions? Or, can the provisions as set forth in Section 807.4, for measuring from the exit access entrance, be applied?

A. Section 812.2 of the 1984 BOCA Basic/National Building Code refers to the travel distance within a single room or space, this means from the remote point within the room or space. The provisions of Section 807.5, redefining what is meant by exit access travel distance, do not have any bearing on Section 812.2.

Interpretation 6/87

Issued April 22, 1988
Section 622.3, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Section 622.3 requires two independent means of egress when the occupant load is more than 50 or in which the travel distance exceeds 75 feet. Should the 75 foot travel distance be measured from the most remote point with no exceptions? Or, can the provisions as set forth in Section 807.4, for measuring from the exit access entrance, be applied?

A. See answer to Interpretation No. 5/87. The intent for 622.3 is the same as that for 812.2.

Interpretation 7/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section 912.6, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Is fire protection required for steel lintels with a span over 6' - 0" located in non-rated bearing or non-bearing walls?

A. No.

Interpretation 8/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section 912.5, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Does this section require all exterior structural members, to carry the same fire resistance rating as exterior bearing walls whether or not they are located in exterior bearing walls?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 9/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section P-1202.1 and Table P-1202.1, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Section P-1202.1 says use Table P-1202.1 for minimum number of fixtures depending on type of building occupancy. Table 1202.1 states that all types except R-2 and R-3 require a service sink.

Q. (1) What is a legal definition of a service sink?

Q. (2) Can a bath tub be a service sink:
a. cast iron
b. enameled steel
c. fiberglass
d. plastic

Q. (3) What is the main purpose of a service sink?

Q. (4) If a tub is acceptable, how do you determine if it will be used as both?

A. (1) A service sink is a plumbing fixture which is designed and dimensioned in accordance with the standards as referenced in Section P-1213.1.

A. (2) No.

A. (3) The main purpose is to provide for janitorial services-- filling and emptying mop buckets used to scrub non-carpeted floors or filling and emptying buckets used when washing windows, wall, etc.

A. (4) Not applicable.

Interpretation 10/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section 2102.6, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Does Article 2102.6 require replacement equipment, i.e., furnace condensers etc. to be installed above base flood elevation if the entire system is not being replaced?

A. No. See Section 118.0 and 101.1 of the Uniform Statewide Building Code.

Interpretation 11/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section 105.0, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Is a building permit required for home improvements, regardless of what work is being done, if the contract amount for that work is $500 or more?

A. Yes, provided such work is not considered an ordinary repair as defined by Section 105.1. The cost of the work is not applicable.

Interpretation 12/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section 105.0, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Can a building official require a copy of the contract between the contractor and the home owner, as a requisite to issue a building permit?

A. No.

Interpretation 13/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section 708.1, USBC, BOCA/1987 Edition

Q. Is the minimum clearance under bulkheads around steel beams and HVAC ductwork in a basement recreation rooms 6' - 6" (Use Group R-3)?

A. No. Beams and girders spaced not less than four feet on center may project no more than six inches below the required ceiling height. The code does not reference HVAC ductwork projecting below the required ceiling height; however, the requirements for furred ceilings (Section 708.2.3) would appear to be applicable under these circumstances.

Interpretation 14/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section 929.1, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

GIVEN:

Section 929.1 states that a plenum shall be limited to one fire area. Article 2 defines a fire area as the floor area that is enclosed and bounded by fire walls, fire separation assemblies or exterior walls of a building to restrict the spread of fire.

Q. (1) In a building required to have 1 hour tenant separation walls which extend tight to the underside of the floor slab or roof deck above, is the plenum area limited to one tenant space?--i.e., do rated tenant separation walls constitute the boundary of a fire area?

Q. (2) If the answer is no, what section of the code governs construction of tenant separation walls?

Q. (3) If the answer is yes, would fire dampers in return air transfer grills or transfer ducts suffice to limit the plenum to one fire area?

A. (1) No.

A. (2) Section 910 and Table 401, Item #8

A. (3) Not applicable.

Interpretation 14/87 (Revised)

Issued September 21, 1990
Section 929.1, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

GIVEN: Section 929.1 states that a plenum shall be limited to one fire area. Article 2 defines a fire area as the floor area that is enclosed and bounded by fire walls, fire separation assemblies or exterior walls of a building to restrict the spread of fire.

Q. (1) In a building required to have 1 hour tenant separation walls which extend tight to the underside of the floor slab or roof deck above, is the plenum area limited to one tenant space?--i.e., do rated tenant separation walls constitute the boundary of a fire area?

Q. (2) If the answer is no, what section of the code governs construction of tenant separation walls?

Q. (3) If the answer is yes, would fire dampers in return air transfer grills or transfer ducts suffice to limit the plenum to one fire area?

A. (1) No.

A. (2) Section 910 and Table 401, Item #8.

A. (3) Not applicable.

Interpretation 15/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section 810.4 and 810.4.1, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Shall an exit access corridor in the office area of a one story office/warehouse building be enclosed in fire separation walls when it connects the warehouse area with the front exit door?

The warehouse area has a rear exit door that opens directly to the outside. The occupant load of the office area is 15 and the occupant load of the warehouse is 20.

A. Yes, except when an automatic fire suppression system is installed in accordance with 810.4.1.

Interpretation 16/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section 118.2 and 105.1(2) USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. If the use of a building is changed within the same use group, (i.e. a building formerly used to manufacture clothing will now be used for printing and publishing) must the building comply with all applicable requirements for the new use?

A. Yes, Section 118.2.

Interpretation 17/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section R-215.2, USBC, Volume I, CABO/1986 and 1987 Edition

Q. When referring to handrail ends, what is meant by this term "returned"?

A. The intent of the term "returned" is to prevent the handrail extensions from protruding in a manner which could result in injury. The return can be accomplished in any manner which satisfies this intent.

Interpretation 18/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section 302.4 and 302.5, BOCA/1986 and 1987 Editions

Q. We have designed a multi-purpose building with a total of 13948 sq. ft. The central space has 7171 sq. ft. and will be used for church assemblies several times a week. At these times, the occupancy will be 600 seated at chairs and 450 seated at tables and chairs.

At other times the same room will function as a gymnasium for basketball, volleyball, etc. The total occupancy at these times will be 200 total. This figure includes teams and maximum spectators. Since this space is serving both recreational and church functions with different occupancies, what should be the Use Group Classification: A-3 recreation with 200 total, or A-4 church with 600 total?

This judgement will be useful in determining other requirements and restrictions of both the 1984 and 1987 BOCA Code.

A. Use Group A-3. See Section 313.1.1.

The occupancy load is to be determined according to the most restrictive requirements (i.e. the higher occupancy load is to be used).

Interpretation 19/87

Issued July 15, 1988
Sections 230-2 and 230-40, National Electrical Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Can a set of service entrance conductors be run to more than one location on the same building; taped off of one lateral?--each location containing six (6) disconnects, same enclosure.

Q. (2) If more than one, how many?

A. (1) Yes. See Exceptions to Section 230-40.

A. (2) No maximum number of locations is specified.

Interpretation 20/87

Issued July 15, 1988
Section 105.1, Item #3, USBC/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Is it the intent of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code to require permits for the installation of portable (plug-in) air conditioners in windows or in sleeves in walls?

Q. (2) If permits are required, are heat gain calculations required for the room where the portable (plug-in) air conditioner would be installed?

Q. (3) If calculations are required, would calculations on heat loss be required if portable (plug-in) heating equipment were to be used in the same room?

Q. (4) If the answer to the above three (3) questions are no, could Section M-111.1.1 of the BOCA National Mechanical Code/1987 be used as a guideline as to when permits and calculations are required?

A. (1) No. See the definition of "Building" in Addendum 1, Article 2. Permits are required for the installation of fixed equipment only.

A. (2) N/A.

A. (3) N/A.

A. (4) No. See Section 105.1.

Interpretation 21/87

Issued July 15, 1988
Section 102.4, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Does the statement "Shall not be personally liable for cost" include attorney's fees?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 22/87

Issued July 15, 1988
Section F-902.1, Article 9, BOCA National Fire Prevention Code/1987 Edition

Q. Are spray paint areas under Article 9, Section F-902.1 exempt from providing fire suppression protection as required by Section F-902.8 if they were in operation before the adoption of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention code, 1987 edition?

A. Yes. Reference should be made to Section F-101.6 of the Fire Prevention Code which states, "Existing Buildings: The Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code shall not impose requirements that are more restrictive than the applicable building code under which said buildings or structures were constructed. Subsequent alteration, enlargement, repair, or conversion of the occupancy classification of such buildings and structures shall be subject to the then current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code."

Interpretation 23/87

Issued July 15, 1988
Section 2002.0, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

Q. Styrofoam brand insulation, manufactured by the Dow Chemical Company, is recognized under BOCA research Report #86-98 which, in turn, relates to Section 2002.0 of the BOCA National Building Code. Does the Virginia State Technical Review Board accept the provisions of BOCA Research Report #86-98 under the Virginia State Building Code as they relate to the use of Styrofoam brand insulation and Dow Grayboard as stated therein?

A. The question is not applicable. Section 107.1 of the USBC states that the building official may consider the recommendations of nationally recognized research testing and product certification organizations in determining the acceptance of a product or material. BOCA research reports may be considered as such documentation by the building official.

Interpretation 24/87

Issued July 15, 1988
Section 906.3 and Table 906.3, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

Q. Does Table 906.3 apply to both rated and non rated walls?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 25/87

Issued July 15, 1988
Section 3102.1.1, 3102.2.4 and 3102.3.4 BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

Q. Does Section 3102.1.1 of the BOCA National Building Code 1987, permit the slab perimeter insulation required by Sections 3102.2.4 and 3102.3.4 to be omitted, provided the overall heat gain or loss is equal to or less than would be the case if the structure complied with the required U_0 values?

A. No. Section 3102.1 states that calculation and measurement procedures and information contained in ASHRAE 90A listed in Appendix A shall be used, except where otherwise noted.

Interpretation 26/87

Issued July 15, 1988
Sections 105.5.1 and 112.0, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Section 105.5.1 of the 1987 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code allows the building official to require elevations of the lowest floor of the building to be shown on the site plan. Does noncompliance with the first floor elevations shown on the approved plans constitute a code violation and can such noncompliance be prosecuted under Section 112.0 of the 1987 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code?

A. Yes. Also see Section 109.0.

Interpretation 27/87

Issued August 19, 1988
Section 612.3, USBC/1987 Edition

Q. Should the climatologist map from the Virginia State Climatology Office be used to determine the frost depths for the state of Virginia?

A. The use of the climatologist map is not mandatory; however, it may be used by the locality when establishing the local frost depth.

Interpretation 28/87

Issued August 21, 1987
Section 230-70, National Electrical Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Does the referenced section of the National Electrical Code permit a service panel box (over-current protection panel) to be located in a bathroom?

Q. (2) If so, would this be considered as a wet or damp location?

A. (1) The National Electric Code does not prohibit the installation of a panel box in a bathroom. Since the code does not specifically prohibit this location, the panel box may be located there.

A. (2) The bathroom, with the exception of the shower, would be considered a dry location.

Interpretation 29/87

Issued August 19, 1988
Section M-405.2, BOCA Basic Mechanical Code/1987 Edition

Q. Is it the intent of subject section to include roof mounted exhaust fans, made-up air fan, range hood exhaust fans, etc., as appliances that will require guards?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 30/87

Issued September 16, 1988
Section R-210.2, One and Two Family Dwelling Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) With regard to Interpretation 457, issued February 1988, should the garage be in the basement area, must the ceiling sheetrock (separation from living area) extend across the top of the foundation wall to contact the sill plate?

Q. (2) Does "completely separated" in this paragraph mean sheetrock hung as per normal installation standards to include gaps created at boxed corners, cut outs at pipes, standard seam joints etc., or does this mean finished joints and interfaces at pipes and sill plates?

Q. (3) If this means hung only, can a gap tolerance be defined?

A. (1) No. See answer to Question #2.

A. (2) The term "completely separated" requires that no gaps exist which expose framing elements to the garage. This includes finished joints and interfaces at pipes and sill plates.

A. (3) See Answer #2 above.

Interpretation 31/87

Issued September 16, 1988
Section 118.2, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Is the intent of Section 118.1 to require compliance with the envelope requirements of Article 31 which would necessitate insulating the exterior wall before furring out to receive any finish materials?

A. No; however, conversion of spaces from one use to another, or from uninhabitable to habitable, require that such space meet the provisions of the USBC in effect at the time of the proposed conversion.

Interpretation 32/87

Issued September 16, 1988
Section 813.3 and 606.0, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) May an open well be used as a grade lobby?

Q. (2) If so, may a required Exit stair discharge into this lobby?

A. (1) Yes. See Section 606.1.2.

A. (2) Yes, providing the lobby meets the requirements of Section 811.3.

Interpretation 33/87

Issued September 16, 1988
Section 816.5, Article I, 1987 Edition

Q. Does a handrail/guardrail constructed of two separate units (as shown in the drawing below) extending the full length of the stairway meet the intent of the code?

A. No.

Interpretation 34/87

Issued November 18, 1988
Section 809, USBC, Volume 1/1987 Edition

Q. (1) When a floor is required to have two independent exits, will a roofed-over open breezeway with open sets of stairs at both ends constitute two independent exits?

Q. (2) If the stairs are considered as "exterior", how close can the two sets of stairs be to each other before they are classified as "interior"?

A. (1) Yes, when located in accordance with the provisions of Section 807.4.

A. (2) The stairs must be located so that they comply with the remoteness provisions of Section 807.4. See item #1 above.

Interpretation 35/87

Issued November 18, 1988
Section 336-10-B, National Electrical Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) In residential construction, is a garbage disposal enclosed by a base cabinet considered subject to physical damage thereby requiring NMC supplying electric to the disposal to be protected under Article 336-10-B of the 1987 National Electrical Code?

Q. (2) In residential construction is a hot water tank electrical feed wire (NMC) subject to physical damage thereby requiring a NMC cable to be protected under Article 336-10-B of the 1987 National Electrical Code?

A. (1) No.

A. (2) No.

Interpretation 36/87

Issued November 18, 1988
Section 512.1, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. (1) In a building of Use Group B, would all offices, conference rooms and/or examining rooms be required to be accessible and usable for persons with physical disabilities?

Q. (2) If not all, then how many of each would need to comply?

A. (1) Yes; however, a modification can be requested under Section 103.2 when it is felt that adequate handicap services are provided.

A. (2) N/A.

Interpretation 37/87

Issued November 18, 1988
Section 1002.8, Exception 3, USBC, Volume 1/1987 Edition

Q. (1) In a child-care facility of construction classification 5A and occupancy classification housing less than 100 children and without a fire-suppression system, is it the intent of USBC Section 1002.8, Exception 3, to require exits directly to the outside from conference rooms, offices, file rooms, toilet rooms, janitor's closets, and kitchens, in addition to those exits provided directly to the outside from classrooms, play rooms, and assembly rooms?

Q. (2) In such a facility with exits directly to the outside provided from all classroom/playroom spaces, from the kitchen, and from the main entrance vestibule, and with sprinkler heads provided in kitchen and storage room, is a building-wide sprinkler system required?

A. (1) No.

A. (2) No.

Interpretation 38/87

Issued November 18, 1988
Section 512 USBC, Volume 1/1987 Edition

In facilities which serve persons with disabilities there is usually only one means of ingress and egress which meets the requirements for physical disabilities (ANSI A117.11).

Q. What is the minimum number related to entrances and exits being accessible to persons with physical disabilities?

A. Section 512.0 would be applicable to all required exits in a building. For example, required exit stairways shall comply with Section 4.9 of the ANSI A117.1 Standard to be considered accessible.

Interpretation 39/87

Issued November 18, 1988
Table P-1202.1, BOCA National Plumbing Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Which of the uses listed under I-2 Use Group in Table P-1202.1 is applicable to a nursing home, "institutional, hospitals" or "sanitariums, etc."?

Q. (2) If the answer to Question #1 is "institutional, hospitals", can a single occupant toilet room having access from two patient rooms serve the occupants of both patient rooms?

A. (1) Institutional, hospitals.

A. (2) Yes.

Interpretation 40/87

Issued November 18, 1988
Sections 1004.1 and 1020.1, USBC, Volume 1/1987 Edition

Section 1004.1 requires that water sprinkler extinguishing systems be installed in accordance with NFiPA 13. Section 3-14.2.3 of NFiPA 13 allows system control valves to be supervised open by means of locking the valves, regardless of the buildings use group.
Section 1020.1 requires that these same valves be supervised in accordance with NFiPA 71, 1985 Edition, NFiPA 72A, 1985 Edition, NFiPA 72C, 1986 Edition, or NFiPA 72D, 1986 Edition, for buildings of Use Groups A, E, I, or R. Locking valves open is clearly prohibited in these use groups.

Q. Which requirement shall govern the supervision of control valves in Use Groups A, E, I, and R?

A. The requirements of Section 1020.1 would apply. Whenever a conflict occurs between the BOCA model codes and any of its referenced standards the model code provisions shall be applicable. See Section 101.1 of the USBC.

Interpretation 41/87

Issued November 18, 1988
Section F-1401.2.1, BOCA Fire Prevention Code/1987 Edition

Q. Is it the intent of Section F-1401.2.1 to require electricity to a building be shut off during fumigation and thermal insecticidal fogging when the process does not create a flammable or explosive atmosphere?

A. No. Section F-100.6 states that the purpose of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (VSFPC) is to provide statewide standards to safeguard life and property from the hazards of fire or explosives. Provided that the permit applicant certifies to the code official that no flammable or explosive condition is created by the fumigation process, then the purpose of the VSFPC has been met.

Interpretation 42/87

Issued November 18, 1988
Sections 807.2.4.3 and 811.3, BOCA/1987 Edition

We have designed a church and an educational building joined by a common lobby. From no point in either building does the distance to and through the lobby to the exit discharge exceed the maximum allowable exit access distance. There are no exits opening into the lobby, i.e. required stairways.

Q. (1) Does Section 811.3 require that this lobby have a fire suppression system?

Q. (2) Does Section 807.2.4.3 require that wall "A" be a 2 hour fire wall?

A. (1) No. Section 811.3 requires an interior lobby to be protected by a fire suppression system where an exit discharges into it.

A. (2) Section 807.2.4.3 is applicable only to theaters.

Interpretation 43/87

Issued November 18, 1988
Section M-1114, CABO 1 & 2 Family Dwelling Code/1986 Edition

Q. Can a closed combustion gas hot water heater be mounted directly on the floor in a private garage as long as the equipment is protected from impact by automobiles?

A. Yes, provided the combustion chamber is completely sealed and draws all combustion air, and discharges the products of combustion, to the exterior of the garage.

Interpretation 44/87

Issued December 16, 1988
Sections 816.9 and 819.1, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

Q. Under Interior Stair Construction, does the last sentence of Section 816.9 ("....stairways shall have solid treads and landing platforms....") when applied to Section 819.1, Exterior Stairways, mean that steel grill plates with drainage holes cannot be used?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 45/87

Issued December 16, 1988
Section 115.0, USBC/1987 Edition

Q. Does the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code allow the issuance of an occupancy permit to be withheld for 24 hours after it has been determined that the building meets all applicable code requirements for occupancy?

A. No.

Interpretation 46/87

Issued January 27, 1989
Article 550-4, 550-23, 373-6, 250-84, 250-91 and 250-115
USBC/National Electrical Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) In performing an electrical service inspection for a mobile home, where does the county's building inspector's jurisdiction end and the power utilities begin?

a) at the trailer
b) at the meter panel
c) at the weather head

Q. (2) If a power utility provides the disconnect, does it have to comply with the National Electrical Code?

A. (1) All electrical equipment installed by the utility that is under the exclusive control of the utility, and located on property by established rights is exempt from the provision of the USBC.

A. (2) See answer to question #1.

Interpretation 47/87

Issued January 27, 1989
Sections P-1500.1 and P-1504.4.5, BOCA National Plumbing Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Is it the intent of Sections P-100.2 Scope, or P-1500.1 Scope, to apply any of the requirements of the plumbing code, such as Section 1504.4.5 which requires "A low pressure cut off shall be installed on all booster pumps....", to fire pump installations?

Q. (2) Is it the intent of the USBC and its referenced standard NFPA 20, Section 2-9.9 to prohibit the installation of a low suction pressure cut off device on a fire pump which receives its supply from a public water main?

A. (1) No. See Section P-100.2

A. (2) Yes.

Interpretation 48/87

Issued January 27, 1989
Section P-911.1, BOCA National Plumbing Code/1987 Edition

Q. Is a food grinder permitted to be installed on a combination waste and vent system?

A. No. Since food waste grinders are listed in the code section for plumbing fixtures, and they are not listed in Section P-911.1 as an acceptable fixture, they cannot be installed in a combination waste and vent system.

Interpretation 49/87

Issued March 6, 1989
Section F-1903.4, State Fire Prevention Code/1987 Edition

Q. Under current Virginia Law, may proprietary card and key activated, unattended, motor fuel dispensing facilities operate which meet the following safety requirements:

1. Training for each card/key user on equipment use, emergency procedures, and general safety;
2. Emergency shut off buttons;
3. Fire extinguishers;
4. Breakaway hose couplings;
5. Posted emergency numbers at each card/key facility;
6. A signed agreement with the user, specifying that the card/key is solely for the use of the signee - use is not transferable to those not properly trained and without a signed agreement on file at the facility.

A. Yes. Section F-1902.2 requires such stations to be installed and operated in accordance with the provisions of Article 28 and NFiPA 30.

Interpretation 50/87

Issued March 6, 1989
Sections 107.1, ES-300.3, ES-301.1 and ES-302.3.2, USBC, Volume II/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Does "maintained in a clean, safe, secure, and sanitary condition" a) mean "clean, safe and sanitary" as in ES- 301.1 (which has been deleted), i.e. "free from any accumulation of rubbish or garbage b) mean "secure" and "safe" as in 107.1, (USBC II), last sentence, i.e. doors locked and windows locked and boarded?

Q. (2) Since this section reads "maintained in a clean, safe, secure, and sanitary condition as herein provided so as not to cause a blighting problem or adversely affect the public health or safety", does this mean that so long as the vacant structures and premises are maintained as above, i.e. "clean, safe, secure and sanitary", that it follows that no blighting problem or any adverse effect on public health or safety has been caused?

Q. (3) What is meant by "blighting problem" and can someone be charged with violation of this section of the code by only e.g., "cause a blighting problem or adversely affect the public health or safety"?

Q. (4) Does some peeling paint on ends of exposed rafters and under roof overhang constitute a "blighting problem or adversely affect the public health or safety"?

Q. (5) Does the color a structure is painted constitute a "blighting problem"?

Q. (6) Does the way a structure "looks" during the process of being repainted from a light color to a dark color constitute a "blighting problem"?

A. (1) a) No. Section ES-301.1 has been deleted from the USBC/Volume II as it applies to "Exterior Property Areas" which is beyond the purpose of Volume II to apply only to buildings and structures as noted in Section 100.8.

b) Yes. Pursuant to Section 107.1 a secured building is deemed to be safe.

A. (2) Yes. "As provided herein" means compliance with the provisions of the BOCA National Existing Structure Code, as amended by Volume II. See also the interpretation of 1(a).

A. (3) As the term is used in the Code, blighting is that deterioration resulting from noncompliance with the provisions of this Code. Section ES-300.3 is a "General" section and cannot serve as the basis for any violation.

A. (4) No. Section ES-302.3.2 of the 1987 BOCA National Existing Structures Code provides regulations for the proper maintenance of exterior surface materials in order to prevent deterioration which could result in a blighting problem.

A. (5) No.

A. (6) No.

Interpretation 51/87

Issued March 6, 1989
Sections ES-301.9, ES-302.3.1, ES-302.3.2, ES-302.3.3 ES-302.3.7, ES-302.1 and 107.1, USBC, Volume II, 1987 Edition

Q. (1) Do these BOCA sections apply to vacant structures that have been properly secured as in USBC Section 107.1, i.e. doors and windows locked and boarded and in addition a "No Trespassing" sign prominently displayed on the front of the building?

Q. (2) Since Section 107.1 (USBC) reads in part: "buildings...that fail to comply with the Building Maintenance Code through damage, deterioration...improper maintenance, or for other reasons...such buildings shall be declared by the code official to be a public nuisance and unfit for human habitation and shall be made safe through compliance with this code or shall be vacated and...secured against public entry...: does the following apply?

a) If a building is vacated and properly secured against public entry prior to being declared a public nuisance by the code official, is it no longer considered to be a "public nuisance"?

b) Since the code reads:"...shall be made safe through compliance with this code or shall vacated, and either secured against public entry, or taken down and removed...", would an owner:

1) have an option as to either compliance with the code or vacating and properly securing the building against public entry?

2) be able to prevent the code official from causing the building to be "taken down and removed" so long as a vacated building is properly secured against public entry and is in no "actual and immediate danger of collapse or failure which would endanger life" but only in need of minor repairs (minor repairs being: loose and peeling paint, repointing mortar in curtain walls, replacing or repairing approximately five cracked or broken asbestos cement roof shingles when the roof is not actually leaking, replacing a few rotted clapboards on a garage/shed, replace part of one porch floorboard that has rotted on the end outside the porch railing)?

c) Would "secured against public entry" require that second floor windows that are unaccessible from the exterior except by a ladder be boarded as well as all first floor windows?

Q. (3) Since ES-302.1 reads that, "The exterior of a structure shall be maintained...so as not to pose a threat to the health, safety or welfare of the occupants and so as to protect the occupants from the adverse affects of the environment." It would seem to indicate that if there were no occupants, i.e. the structures were vacant, that none of the subsections making up Sections ES-302.0 would apply. Is this a correct interpretation?

A. (1) No, unless there is immediate danger of collapse or failure which would endanger life, or when a violation of this code results in a hazard that creates an immediate,

serious and imminent threat to the life and safety of the occupants. See Section 107.7 of Volume II.

A. (2) a) If the building is secured against public entry in accordance with Volume II, the building is considered safe. If the building is in danger of collapse or otherwise injuring someone on adjacent public or private property, the code official is empowered by Section 107.0 of Volume II to have the building razed.

b) 1) Yes, except when the provisions of Section 107.7 of Volume II apply.

2) Yes; see Section 103.0 Appeal to the Local Board of Building Code Appeals.

c) Yes.

A. (3) Yes, except when the provisions of Section 107.7 of Volume II apply.

Interpretation 52/87

Issued May 19, 1987
Section 250-114, National Electrical Code/1987 Edition

Q. When an EMT system is installed with a equipment grounding conductor, does it have to be attached to every metal box?

A. No. See Section 250-57(a) and 250-91(B)(4).

Interpretation 53/87

Issued May 19, 1989
Section 105.10, USBC/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Would an asbestos inspection be required, in a portion of a building if the building itself exceeded 3,500 square feet and the area that is to be renovated did not exceed 3,500 square feet?

Example: A shopping mall of 30,000 square feet and a store within this mall is being renovated and only has 1,200 square feet. Would an asbestos inspection be required on the 1,200 square foot store?

Q. (2) Would an office building consisting of more than 3,500 square feet, with a central heating system be required to have an asbestos inspection on the whole building if only one floor was being renovated?

A. (1) Yes.

A. (2) No. Only those portions being renovated are required to be inspected.

Interpretation 54/87

Issued May 19, 1989
Section 811.0, BOCA Basic Building Code/1987 Edition

Given: A required exit stair discharges into a vestibule which is protected in accordance with 811.3, and separated in accordance with 811.5.

Q. Must the vestibule be separated in accordance with Section 811.2.2?

A. No. Section 811.1 requires that the exit be directly connected to the public way, or to an open court leading to the public way, by an enclosed passageway constructed as provided herein. Compliance with either 811.2 or 811.3, regardless of how the space is identified, is considered acceptable.

Interpretation 55/87

Issued May 19, 1989
Section 812.4.1.1, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Section 812.4.1.2(5) mentions "the release device," but no where is this device identified.

Q. (1) Is it the intent of the code that this "device" be an integral part of the door, i.e.: knob or panic hardware?

Q. (2) Would a "mushroom", or palm type button placed adjacent to the door be an acceptable alternative?

Q. (3) Is it the intent of the code that "the release device" conform to Section 812.4.1?

A. (1) Yes

A. (2) No.

A. (3) Yes.

Interpretation 56/87

Issued May 19, 1989
Section 370-19 and 110-16, National Electrical Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Does Article 370-19 of the NEC require 30" X 30" access panels to above ceiling areas when recessed light fixtures are installed in the ceiling?

Q. (2) Does Section 110-16 of the NEC apply to the disconnects and controllers mounted on or adjacent to equipment such as duct heaters installed above a ceiling grid? That is, must the total area listed by 110-16 be kept totally clear of such things as ceiling grid support wire and sprinkler piping?

Q. (3) Do the above code sections (90-4 and 110-12) require striping and identification of a concrete duct bank installed integral with the ceiling/floor structure of a building?

Q. (4) Which section of the NEC is applicable (424-3 or 220-15) to a feeder circuit consisting of a 40A circuit breaker with #8 conductors feeding two or more fused switches each coupling a P1B unit (power induction box or fan coil unit i.e., a duct heater with partial horsepower fan)?

Q. (5) Does article 430-14 require fixed ladders and maintenance platforms for working on an exhaust fan motor located approximately 40 feet above finished floor level in a large areaway?

A. (1) No. Section 370-19 of the 1987 NEC does not require a 30" X 30" access panel; however, the junction box must be accessible.

A. (2) Yes, but Section 110-16 cautions that other clearances may be required as listed in Section 424-66, which states that sufficient clearance must be maintained to permit access for service and cleaning.

A. (3) No.

A. (4) Section 220-15.

A. (5) No.

Interpretation 57/87

Issued May 19, 1989
Section P-402.3, BOCA National Plumbing Code/1987 Edition

Q. Under P-402.3 where a water service is installed running underground below the slab, is the point of entry at floor penetration?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 58/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section R-206, USBC/1986 Edition

Q. Use Group R-4. A basement recreation room has a ceiling height of 7' - 9". Can the clearance under boxdowns built around a steel beam and HVAC ductwork be 6' - 6" if not more than 50% of the ceiling area? Exception #1 allows a six inch projection under a 7' - 0" furred ceiling.

A. No. Exception #1 allows beams and girders spaced not less than four feet on center to project not more than six inches below the required ceiling height.

Interpretation 59/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section R-215.2, USBC/1986 Edition

Q. Is the 36 inch measurement of required height for guardrails acceptable from the subfloor? Standard prebuilt rails are 36 inches high.

A. Guardrail height is to be measured from the finished floor surface to the top of the rail. Carpeting, and other like materials, are considered as floor coverings, and are not included in such measurement.

Interpretation 60/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section R-115, USBC/1986 Edition

Q. When building under R-4, does the definition of "story" in CABO allow for the construction of homes that are three story and a mezzanine? BOCA 1987 has a definition of mezzanine that does not show it to be a story.

A. Yes. Pursuant to Section 101.1 of the USBC, and Section 309.5 of the 1987 BOCA National Building Code, the mezzanine would not be considered an additional story unless it exceeded one third (1/3) of the area of that story. See Section 605.2 of the 1987 BOCA National Building Code.

Interpretation 61/87

Issued July 15, 1988
Section R-203.5, CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code/1986 Edition

Single family attached townhouses that are built as a complex have two separate 1-hour exterior fire separation walls adjoining the separate property line between two dwelling units. These two 1- hour fire separation walls are terminated at the underside of a combustible roof sheathing, and support the common attached roof assembly above.

Q. (1) Does this type of construction meet the requirements of the USBC, Volume I?

Q. (2) If the answer to question #1 is no, does the USBC require these two 1-hour walls structurally attached at the roof to be terminated as required or a 2-hour fire wall?

A. (1) No.

A. (2) No.

Interpretation 62/87
Issued March 18, 1988
Section M-801.7, BOCA Basic/National Mechanical Code/1987 Edition

Section 801.7 states that metallic pipe or tubing used for gas piping that is exposed to corrosive action, such as soil conditions or moisture, shall be protected with an approved coating.

Q. (1) Is gas piping that is run exposed to a roof-top air conditioning unit subject to the above stated corrosive action (i.e. exposed to moisture by virtue of being exposed to the elements)?

Q. (2) What constitutes an "approved coating"? (in particular does galvanized pipe meet this requirement?)

A. (1) Yes.

A. (2) An approved coating is one which is approved by the building official as providing the necessary protection from the corrosive action to which it is subjected. (Galvanized piping is considered as meeting the intent of this section.)

Interpretation 63/87

Issued May 27, 1988
Section 105.0, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Is a building permit required to replace existing windows in a single family dwelling, with like type windows and no structural changes?

A. No. See item #3 of the exception to Section 105.1.

Interpretation 64/87

Issued July 28, 1989
Section 201.0, 307.0 and 309.0, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

What are the PROPER Use Group Classifications for buildings which are housing the following:

Q. (1) Individuals who by reasons of physical or mental disability or condition are unable to vacate a building in case of an emergency without the assistance of another person?

Q. (2) Individuals who must live in a supervised environment and are:

a) Physically and mentally capable of exiting the building without assistance in an emergency and can ascend or descend stairs if present in any necessary exit path.

b) Individuals who are capable of exiting the building with the assistance of a wheelchair, walker, cane, prosthetic device or verbal command.

A. (1) Use Group I-2 for buildings housing six or more occupants.

A. (2) a) Use Group R if housing 20 or less individuals. Use Group I-1 if housing 21 or more individuals.

b) Same as 2a.

Interpretation 65/87

Issued July 28, 1989
Section R-203.2 and R-203.4, CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code/1986 Edition

Given: Two townhouses which have roof coverings of 1000 square feet in area.

Q. (1) Are parapets required as an extension of the common wall?
Given: A common wall on the interior lot line of a townhouse divides the property lines.

Q. (2a) Are openings within three feet of this common wall allowed in the roof;

i) when a parapet is located as an extension of the common wall;

ii) when the exception of Section 203.4 has been met?

Q. (2b) Are openings within three feet of the common wall allowed in the intersecting exterior walls abutting the common wall?

A. (1) Yes.

A. (2a)i) Yes.

ii) No.

A. (2b) Yes.

Interpretation 66/87

Issued July 28, 1989
Sections 1004.1 and 1020.1, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Section 1004.1 requires that water sprinkler extinguishing systems be installed in accordance with NFiPA 13. Section 3-14.2.3 of NFiPA 13 allows system control valves to be supervised open by means of locking the valves, regardless of the buildings use group.
Section 1020.1 requires that these same valves be supervised in accordance with NFiPA 71, 1985 Edition, for buildings if Use Group A, E, I, or R.

Q. Which requirement shall govern the supervision of control valves in Use Groups A, E, I, and R?

A. The requirements of Section 1020.1 would apply. Whenever a conflict occurs between the BOCA model Codes and any of its referenced standards the model code provisions shall be applicable. See Section 101.1 of the USBC.

Interpretation 67/87

Issued August 18, 1989
Section 230-83 and 250-84, National Electrical Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Where the Grounding Electrode System of a new building will consist solely of one rod electrode conforming to Section 250-83 (c), could it be accepted without proof of the measurement of its resistance to ground as required by 250-84?

Q. (2) Could two rods over six feet apart be used without any measurement?

A. (1) No.

A. (2) Yes.

Interpretation 68/87

Issued August 18, 1989
Section F-2805, Fire Prevention Code/1987 Edition

Q. Does the code permit a 500 gallon above ground storage tank for dispensing kerosene at a service station?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 69/87 (number not used)

Interpretation 70/87

Issued August 18, 1989
Sections 230-71, 230-72 and 701-11, National Electrical Code/1987 Edition

Q. Does the National Electrical Code prohibit additional service disconnecting means for legally required standby systems if connected ahead of the six normal service disconnecting means?

A. No, provided the installation is in accordance with Section 700-12(e) of the National Electrical Code.

Interpretation 71/87

Issued August 18, 1989
Sections 105.1, 110.0 and F-104.0, USBC, Volume I, State Fire Prevention Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Shall the local building official require the owner of an underground storage tank, or his authorized agent, to obtain a building permit and require inspections in accordance with provisions of the USBC (Sections 105 and 110) when any of the following actions are taken;

A.	Install	E.	Upgrade
B.	Remove	F.	Abandon
C.	Repair	G.	Change of Use
D.	Alter		

Q. (2) Shall the local fire official require the owner of an under-ground storage tank, or his authorized agent to obtain a permit in accordance with the SFPC when any of the above referenced actions are taken?

A. (1) Yes. Item B "Removal" and item F "Abandonment" are considered as demolition.

A. (2) No, permits may be issued at the option of the local fire official in accordance with Sections F-104, F-2800 and F-2804 for the operation of the underground storage tank system after a Certificate of Use has been issued by the building official.

Interpretation 72/87

Issued September 22, 1989
Section 1019.4.1, BOCA Basic Building Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Section 1019.4.1 states in part: "The exhaust system shall be activated by smoke detectors complying with NFPA 72E listed in Appendix A....." Is it the intent of this section that open area smoke detection be provided throughout the covered mall and associated tenant spaces?

Q. (2) Do the return air smoke detectors referenced in this section of the Code and any additional smoke detection devices installed to activate the smoke control system need to activate an interior audible evacuation alarm if the activation of the detectors is monitored at a 24- hour manned location within the covered mall?

A. (1) No. 1019.4.1 requires that smoke detectors complying with NFiPA 72E be installed to activate the smoke control system. The second sentence of the section requires these detectors to be located only in the return air portion of every heating and cooling system.

A. (2) No. The smoke detectors required by Section 1019.0 are for activation of the smoke control system only. These detectors are not required to activate an interior audible alarm. Also see Section 1020.2 which requires the smoke control system, as part of the required fire protection systems, be connected to an approved central station system, proprietary system or remote station system.

Interpretation 73/87

Issued September 22, 1989
Section 210-70, National Electrical Code/1987 Edition

Q. Does a two room suite in a hotel, which is offered as a single guest room, require a wall mounted light switch at the entrance of each room of the suite?

A. No. The Code only specifies that a wall switch is required within each room. It does not specify where it shall be located.

Interpretation 74/87

Issued September 22, 1989
Section F-2800.2, Statewide Fire Prevention Code/1987 Edition

Q. Is it the intent of Article 28, Section F-2800.2 to require that a permit be obtained from the local code official for each Virginia A.B.C. Store (package liquor store) operated by the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control of the Commonwealth of Virginia and located on property which is leased by the Commonwealth from private owners?

A. No permit is required from a local (fire) code official for Virginia A.B.C. Stores operated by the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control of the Commonwealth of Virginia and located on property which is leased by the Commonwealth from private owners. Enforcement of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code regarding such facilities would be under the authority of the State Fire Marshal.

Interpretation 75/87

Issued October 27, 1989
Section 619.0, USBC, Volume I, F-1901.1 and F-2803.0, Statewide Fire Prevention Code/1987 Edition

Section 619.1 of the Uniform Statewide Building Code references NFPA 30 and the Fire Prevention Code for installations of structures (tanks) containing flammable or combustible liquids. The Fire Prevention Code prohibits above ground storage of flammable or combustible liquids, except at bulk storage plants and at a limit of 660 gallons for fuel oil heating equipment. NFPA 30 and 30A permit installations of above ground tanks to a limit of 6000 gallons at "private" locations (such as industrial, commercial and government installations) where the "public" is not permitted access.

Q. Since both the Fire Prevention code and NFiPA 30 are referenced by the Uniform Statewide Building Code, which standard would apply to private locations?

A. The provisions of Section F-1901.1 of the Fire Prevention Code require service stations dispensing fuel to motor vehicles to store all flammable and combustible liquids used or intended to be used as fuel for motor vehicles in underground tanks. Only those sections of NFiPA 30 which relate to underground storage tanks are applicable. Those portions of NFiPA 30A which allow above ground tanks at private locations are not applicable.

Interpretation 76/87

Issued October 27, 1989 Section P-906.1 and P-906.2 BOCA Basic Plumbing Code/1987 Edition

Q. In order to comply with Section P-906, is a portion of a wet vent system required to serve as a drain for a lavatory or combination fixture?

A. No.

A wet vent system shall comply with P-906.1 and P-906.2. The drain from an individually vented lavatory is permitted, but not required, to be part of a wet vent system.

Interpretation 77/87

Issued December 15, 1989
Section 103.4, USBC, Volume II, and Section 2602, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Editions

Q. Are there any requirements, either in Volume I or Volume II, of the 1987 USBC that the Building Official periodically inspect or test existing elevators or that the Building Official require an approved agency to inspect or test existing elevators?

A. No. However under the provisions of the USBC, Volume II, Building Maintenance Code, localities may require the inspection of elevators in existing buildings.

Interpretation 78/87

Issued December 15, 1989
Section 105.0, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Is a building permit required to replace existing windows in a single family dwelling, with like type windows and no structural changes?

A. Yes; however, Item #3 of the exception to Section 105.1 does exclude certain glazing repairs from the permit requirements.

Interpretation 79/89

Issued December 15, 1989
Section 105.10, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. For buildings subject to Section 105.10, shall an owner's statement for asbestos inspection or abatement be required by the local building department prior to issuing a building permit for the installation of the following materials when the work will not disturb, damage or remove the existing materials:

(1) Roof Covering
(2) Floor Covering
(3) Exterior Siding
(4) Interior Wall Finish

A. No. Such activities are not considered to be renovations or demolitions, and a building permit may be issued by the local building department without receiving an asbestos inspection and abatement from the building owner.

Interpretation 80/87

Issued January 19, 1990
Section 619.1, BOCA National Building Code, Section F-1901.1, and F-2803, BOCA National Fire Prevention Code, and Section 103.2, USBC, Volume I/1987 Editions

Q. Does Interpretation 75/87 prohibit the building official from granting a modification to permit the installation of an above ground storage tank for motor vehicle fuels when the request for modification indicates the installation will conform to the requirements of NFiPA 30A?

A. No. Interpretation 75/87 identifies and addresses those portions of the NFiPA standards which are directly referenced by the model code. The authority of the building official to grant modifications has in no way been diminished or restricted. Such modifications are permitted when issued in accordance with Sections 103.2, 103.2.1 and 103.2.2 of the USBC. Due consideration should be given to any request for modification when the spirit and intent of the USBC, as stated in Section 100.7, is observed and public health, welfare and safety are assured.

Interpretation 81/87

Issued January 19, 1990
Sections F-1902.3, F-2805.0, and F-2807.0, Statewide Fire Prevention Code/1987 Edition

Q. Does the Statewide Fire Prevention Code allow the use of portable, semi-portable or movable tanks to dispense fuel into the tanks of motor vehicles at locations which are not accessible to the general public?

A. Yes. These tanks are permitted to be used by Sections F-1902.3 and F-2801.5 of the BOCA National Fire Prevention Code. Movable tanks include portable, semi-portable and tank vehicles, and are regulated by Sections F-2805.0 and F-2807.0,NFiPA 30 and NFiPA 385. Movable tanks used for dispensing fuels to motor vehicles are limited to temporary use only, as approved by the code official.

Interpretation 82/87

Issued January 19, 1990
Section F-2805, Statewide Fire Prevention Code/1987 Edition

Q. Does the code permit above ground tanks larger than 500 gallons to be used for the storage of kerosene to be dispensed at service stations?

A. Yes. Approved portable tanks no exceeding 660 gallons (individual capacity) are permitted in accordance with Section F-2805. Tanks shall be installed in accordance with the applicable portions of the Fire Prevention Code and NFiPA 30.

Interpretation 83/87

Issued February 16, 1990
Section 118.1 and 512, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Given: The separation wall between two existing tenant spaces, presently classified as Use Group M, is partially demolished to form one space with an area in excess of 1,000 square feet. The Use Group Classification will remain unchanged. No alterations are proposed for the existing restroom facilities. Based on the present plumbing code requirements, the number of fixtures provided is adequate for the occupant load of the combined spaces. However, the existing fixtures and facilities do not meet the accessibility requirements of Section 512 for persons with physical disabilities.

Q. Are the existing restrooms required to be renovated to conform to the requirements of Section 512?

A. No. Section 118.1 states that "Existing parts of such buildings not being reconstructed, renovated, or repaired, need not be brought into compliance with the current edition of the USBC." However, if additional employee or customer restrooms are provided, or are required due to an increased occupant load, those facilities must be accessible.

Interpretation 84/87

Issued February 16, 1990
Section 100.6(2), USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Are water towers and standpipes erected by a publicly regulated utility service, located on property by established rights, and under the exclusive control of the public service agency exempt from the requirements of the USBC per Section 100.6(2)?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 85/87

Issued February 16, 1990
Section 100.6(2) and 100.6(3), USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Ref: Section 100.6(2)

In a power generating plant (cogenerator) owned and operated by a publicly regulated utility, which equipment and systems would be considered "distribution equipment" exempt from the requirements of the Uniform Statewide Building Code?

Q. (2) Ref: Section 100.6(3)

If the power generating plant is owned by a private business and not a publicly regulated utility, would the same power generating equipment and system be considered "manufacturing and processing machines and equipment" exempt from the requirements of the USBC?

A. (1) All of the generating equipment and systems (including but not limited to the fuel supply systems, boilers, turbines, water and steam circulating systems) would be exempt. The buildings housing these systems and equipment, including the service equipment and connections, would not be exempt.

A. (2) Yes.

Interpretation 86/87

Issued February 16, 1990
Section 100.6(2), USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Would the installation of distribution equipment and control systems, under the exclusive control of a public utility and located on property by established rights, be exempt from the USBC when the installation is done by subcontractors for the publicly regulated utility rather than employees of the utility?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 87/87

Issued May 18, 1990
Section 621.3, USBC/1987 Edition

Q. What constitutes a "permanent foundation" for a manufactured home or mobile home?

A. Permanent Foundations for manufactured homes or mobile homes include any of the following types of foundations selected by the owner, dealer or contractors:

1. Masonry piers and anchoring systems, specified by the manufacturer of the home in the installation instructions, as required and approved in accordance with the Federal Manufactured Housing Construction Safety Standards.

2. Concrete foundations or permanent wood foundation systems constructed in compliance with the ANSI A225.1 Manufactured Home Installation Standard.

3. Foundations meeting the requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Handbook 4930.3, Permanent Foundations Guide for Manufactured Housing.

4. Foundation systems for manufactured homes over basements.

5. Any other foundation system approved as a permanent foundation by the authority having jurisdiction as outlined in Section 107.1 of the USBC.

Interpretation 88/87

Issued May 19, 1989
Section 100.5.1 and 119.0, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition
Section 100.6 and 102.3, Industrialized Building Regulation/1987 Edition

Q. (1) If an unlabeled mobile home was built after January 1, 1972, but before June 15, 1976, would Section 102.3 of the Industrialized Building Regulations require the building official to determine if the unlabeled mobile home met the applicable edition of the Regulations?

Q. (2) If the unlabeled mobile home was built prior to January 1, 1972, would the provisions of Sections 100.5.1 and 119.0 of the USBC require the building official to determine acceptability of the unit.

Q. (3) In the definition of "building regulation" in Section 36-97(7) of the Code of Virginia, local zoning ordinances that "do not affect the manner of construction or materials to be used" are not superseded by the USBC. Would it be proper for a local zoning ordinance to prohibit unlabeled mobile homes and require all mobile or manufactured homes to have a HUD label (be built under the Federal program) since the HUD label prescribes materials and methods of construction?

A. (1) Yes.

A. (2) Yes.

A. (3) No. Zoning regulations do not control the manner of construction or the materials to be used.

Interpretation 89/87

Issued May 18, 1990
Section 816.9.2, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Is a required interior exit stair required to be enclosed in a rated fire separation assembly when the stair does not connect one story of the building to another (e.g., stair from basement leading directly to exterior grade level exit door)?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 90/87

Issued May 19, 1990
Section 106.2, USBC, Volume II/1987 Edition

Given: Section 106.2 of the Uniform Statewide Building Code - Volume II (1987 Edition) requires that "the code official shall serve a notice of violation on the person responsible for maintenance or use of a building in violation of the provisions of this code."

Q. (1) Does Section 106.2 require personal or substituted service of the notice, as defined in Virginia Code § 8.01-296?

Q. (2) Does the mailing by certified mail, return receipt requested of the notice by the code official to the person responsible constitute "service" of the notice required by Section 106.2?

A. (1) The intent of this section is to require the code official to make a diligent effort to cause the person responsible for the maintenance or use of a building to become aware of any violations of the code. This notice, in effect, becomes an order to discontinue and abate the violation. The methods or procedures to be observed by the code official in the delivery of the notice are not specified by the regulation and may be set by local policy. The methods employed may include, but are not limited to, personal service, substituted service (as defined by the Code of Virginia), and service by certified mail, return receipt requested.

A. (2) Yes (See answer #1 above).

Interpretation 91/87

Issued May 18, 1990
Section 307.4, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

Q. In buildings of Use Group I-2, are exit doors permitted to be locked to prevent egress from rooms or from the building?

A. All egress doors must be readily openable from the side from which egress is to be made without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort; however locking devices may be installed to restrict egress from Use Group I-2 mental health patient rooms in accordance with Section 812.4.1, exception #2 and Section 610.4.2. Any means of egress door in buildings of Use Group I, may be equipped with an egress control device when the device conforms to the requirements of Section 812.4.1.2.

Interpretation 92/87

Issued May 18, 1990
Sections 809.5, 816.9.2 and 1012.1, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

GIVEN: A standpipe is required to be installed in an open parking structure. Section 1012.1 requires all standpipe systems to be installed in accordance with NFiPA 14, which requires: "standpipes shall be located in noncombustible fire-rated stair enclosures." Sections 809.5 and 816.9.2 provide exceptions to enclosing required interior exit stairways in open parking structures, thereby making a fireresistance rating unnecessary.

Q. If a standpipe is installed in an open parking structure, is it required to be installed within a firerated enclosure in accordance with NFiPA 14?

A. No. See 101.1 of the USBC.

Interpretation 93/87

Issued May 18, 1990
Section 913.4, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

Q. Does a factory built chimney for low heat appliances have to be enclosed in a rated shaft when it penetrates a fireresistance rating floor/ceiling, when it will penetrate through one or more dwelling units above?

A. No, providing the fire rated integrity of the building is maintained.

Interpretation 94/87

Issued May 18, 1990
Sections 1004.5 and 1004.5.1, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Are the sprinkler system alarm devices required by Sections 1004.5 and 1004.5.1 intended to serve as general building evacuation alarms?

Q. (2) Are the sprinkler system alarm devices required by Sections 1004.5 and 1004.5.1 intended to be audible throughout the building?

A. (1) No.

A. (2) No.

Comment: The sprinkler alarms required by Sections 1004.5 and 1004.5.1 are water flow alarms and are not required to serve as building evacuation alarms; however, they may be utilized for that purpose (see Section 1017.0 Fire Protective Signaling Systems).

Interpretation 95/87

Issued September 21, 1990
Sections 103.2.1, 105.5, 105.6, and 105.9, USBC/1987 Edition

GIVEN: Plans for a building or structure are prepared, signed and sealed by an architect or professional engineer licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The competence of the design professional to design and prepare plans for the proposed work is not an issue.

Q. Is the Building Official permitted to take the following actions?

(1) Reject the plans without stating, in writing, the reasons for the rejection.

(2) Require the building owner to submit substitute plans, specifications, or opinions prepared by a licensed architect or professional engineer other than the design professional responsible for the original design and plans.

A. (1) No. Deficiencies identified in the plan review process, which result in the rejection of the permit application, must be communicated to the permit applicant in writing.

A. (2) No.

Interpretation 96/87

Issued September 21, 1990
Sections 107.1, R-202.1 and R-215.2, USBC, Volume I and CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code/1987 Edition

GIVEN: A permit applicant has elected to utilize the CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code (OTFDC) as permitted by Section 101.1 of the USBC. Section R-202.1 of the OTFDC requires all buildings and structures and parts thereof to be designed to support safely all loads. Section R-215 of the OTFDC specifies particular requirements for guardrails and handrails; however, it does not specify minimum design load criteria for guardrails or handrails. The BOCA National Building Code does specify minimum design load requirements for these building components.

Q. (1) Does Section 107.1 of the USBC allow the building official to impose, as minimum requirements, the BOCA design load criteria for guardrails in dwellings constructed in accordance with the CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code?

Q. (2) If not, what design loads are to be used to comply with R-202.1 of CABO?

A. (1) The guardrail design criteria of the BOCA National Building Code is not specifically referenced by the CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code and is, therefore, not enforceable. Section 107.1 requires the building designer to submit sufficient technical data to show that materials or assemblies, intended for use as a guardrail, will perform in a satisfactory manner. Approval by the building official is subject to the requirements of the USBC.

In evaluating the data submitted for a particular material or assembly, the building official must determine whether it will perform the function intended in a manner consistent with the requirements of Section 100.7. While the building official may not "impose" the requirements of other standards in instances where the CABO Code is silent, the building official may approve the use of any material, equipment, device or assembly when it will not create a hazardous or unsafe condition for the building occupants.

A. (2) See the answer to Question 1.

Interpretation 97/87

Issued September 21, 1990
Section F-2804.6(3), Statewide Fire Prevention Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Can the fire official cite Section F-2804.6(3) as authority to force the removal of an underground heating oil tank located on the premises of a one or two family dwelling when the tank has not been in use for more than one year?

Q. (2) If the answer to question 1 is no, what is the responsibility of the fire official regarding such tanks when they are perceived to create an unsafe condition?

Q. (3) Are tanks, which are no longer used to store flammable and combustible liquids but which are maintained in accordance with the provisions of the USBC, Volume II, considered to be a hazard or abandoned?

A. (1) No. Due to conflicts with the New Construction and Building Maintenance provisions of the USBC and due to conflicts with the UST Regulations promulgated by the State Water Control Board, Section F-2804.6 is invalid in accordance with Section F-100.5 of the VSFPC.

A. (2) Section F-106.4 requires the fire official to report all unsafe structures to the building or maintenance code official "who shall take appropriate action deemed necessary under the provisions of the Uniform Statewide Building Code, Volume I, New Construction Code, or Volume II, Building Maintenance Code, to secure abatement by repair and rehabilitation or by demolition."

A. (3) No.

Interpretation 98/87

Issued September 21, 1990
Sections 918.2, 929.1 and M-311.2, BOCA National Building Code and BOCA National Mechanical Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Does Section M-311.0, exception 3, apply to sheet metal return air transfer ducts in a building of type 1B construction equipped throughout with an approved automatic fire suppression system and where the tenant separation walls (not the walls that are part of the corridor) are one-hour rated (slab to slab)?

Q. (2) What would suffice to limit the plenum to one fire area, and where is this referenced in the BOCA Code?

A. (1) Yes.

A. (2) A plenum is limited to the boundaries of a Fire Area as defined by Section 201.0 of the BOCA National Building Code: i.e., the floor area enclosed by exterior walls as governed by Table 401, line 1; fire walls as governed by Table 401, line 2; or fire separation assemblies as governed by Table 401, line 3. A fire resistance rated tenant separation wall does not constitute the boundary of a fire area unless that wall also (1) separates mixed uses, (2) subdivides a building into multiple fire areas, or (3) serves as a fire wall. See Interpretation 14/87, as revised.

Interpretation 99/87

Issued September 21, 1990
Section 1012.3, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

Q. In a non high-rise building equipped throughout with an automatic fire suppression system, does the code require that either a residual pressure of 65 psi or a residual pressure equivalent to the sprinkler system demand pressure be maintained at the top most outlet of each standpipe riser?

A. No.

Interpretation 100/87

Issued September 21, 1990
Section 1004.3, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

GIVEN: A sprinkler system is to be installed in a building with more than one standpipe riser.

Q. (1) Are the hydraulic calculations for the sprinkler system permitted to be made assuming simultaneous supply by more than one riser or standpipe?

Q. (2) Is the sprinkler system required to be connected to more than one riser?

A. (1) Yes.

A. (2) No, subject to the area limitations of NFiPA 13, 1985 edition, Section 3-3.1.

Interpretation 101/87

Issued November 16, 1990
Section 107.1, USBC, Volume I/1987 Edition

Q. Does Section 107.1 of the USBC authorize the Building Official to deny approval of any material, intended for use as a structural component of a building, when the data submitted for review does not (in the opinion of the Building Official) adequately identify the structural strength and design stress properties, or the durability of that material?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 102/87

Issued January 18, 1991
Section 2909.0, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

GIVEN:

The structural support of an advertising sign is provided by uprights or braces in or upon the ground. The face of the sign is cantilevered so as to completely overhang the roof of an adjacent building but it is in no way attached to or supported by any portion of the building or roof.

Q. Is it the intent of the USBC that the provisions of Section 2909.0, regarding roof signs, are equally applicable to a ground sign (as defined in Article 2) which is, at any point, "above" of the roof of a building?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 103/87

Issued January 18, 1991
Sections 610.3, 610.6, 1018.3.1, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition, 3rd. Amendment

Q. Does the USBC intend that an automatic fire detection system be installed throughout all areas of Use Group I-2 buildings, or only those areas specified by Sections 610.3 and 610.6?

A. The intent of the USBC is to require the automatic fire detection system to be provided at the locations specified in Section 610. The system must comply with the installation requirements listed in Section 1018.0 (e.g. comply with NFiPA 72E, etc.).

Interpretation 104/87

Issued February 15, 1991
Sections 101.0 USBC, Volume II and ES- 701.6 BOCA National Existing Structures Code/1987 Edition

Q. (1) Is it the intent of the USBC, Volume II, to require that an existing building be altered or "retrofitted" to conform to requirements of the model code that do not specifically pertain to building maintenance?

Q. (2) Is the code official granted authority to require that an existing building be altered to provide a second independent exit from each floor above the second floor in accordance with Section ES-701.6, BOCA National Existing Structures Code, 1987 edition, when the building in question is maintained and used in accordance with a certificate of occupancy issued by the locality and when no change of building use has occurred?

A. (1) No. Section 101.4, USBC, Volume II, 1987 edition, limits application of the model code to matters that pertain to building maintenance.

A. (2) No. See answer to question #1.

Interpretation 105/87

Issued February 15, 1991
Sections 105.0 and 101.0, USBC, Volumes I and II/1987 Edition

Q. (1) If a certificate of occupancy has been issued for an existing building, does the USBC provide for or require the issuance of a revised or replacement certificate of occupancy upon the occurrence of a change in ownership if the subsequent owner will continue to occupy the building without a change in use?

Q. (2) If no change in building use has occurred, does any provision of the USBC, Volumes I and II authorize the code or building official to revoke, invalidate or otherwise refuse to acknowledge a previously issued certificate of occupancy?

A. (1) No. A certificate of occupancy remains valid until (a) the subject building or structure is changed, in whole or in part, from one use group to another, or (b) the building or structure no longer exists.

A. (2) No.

Interpretation 106/87

Issued February 15, 1991
Section 220-41(B)(1), National Electrical Code/1987 Edition

Regarding the minimum circuit requirements for receptacle outlets located in the following rooms of a dwelling unit: kitchen, dining room, breakfast room, pantry, or similar room:

Q. (1) What is the minimum number of small appliance branch circuits required to serve all receptacle outlets in these rooms?

Q. (2) Except for those receptacles installed to serve countertop surfaces in the kitchen, are two small appliance branch circuits required to serve receptacle outlets in each of the above named rooms? (e.g., are the receptacle outlets in the dining room required to be divided between two circuits?)

A. (1) Two.

A. (2) No. Except for receptacle outlets serving kitchen countertop spaces, it is not the intent of the code to require that both of the two required circuits extend to each of the rooms named in the question.

Interpretation 107/87

Issued February 15, 1991
Section 812.4.1, BOCA National Building Code/1987 Edition

Q. Are the provisions of Section 813.4.5, found in the 1991 BOCA supplement to the BOCA National Building Code, considered an acceptable alternative locking arrangement for all egress doors in buildings of the Use Groups noted in that section?

A. Yes.

Interpretation 108/87 — [illegible] due to change in code

Issued February 15, 1987
Sections 706.2.3, BOCA National Building Code and ES-302.4.4, BOCA National Existing Structures Code/1987 Edition

GIVEN:

Article 706.2.3 of the USBC, Volume I, New construction Code and ES 302.4.4 of Volume II, Building Maintenance Code, address the installation of insect screens. In each instance the Code requires insect screens on every door and window.

Q. (1) Are there any exceptions to this requirement?

Q. (2) Are screen doors required on exterior doors opening into habitable rooms within a dwelling unit equipped with central air conditioning/heating?

Q. (3) Are screen doors required on doors opening to garages, foyers, hallways or utility rooms?

A. (1) Yes. As an alternative to natural ventilation, building ventilation may be accomplished by mechanical means. Insect screens are not required at door or operable window openings in such instances. Also, a specific exception is provided to ES-302.4.4 of the BOCA National Existing Structures Code.

A. (2) No.

A. (3) A screen must be provided for any opening that is part of a <u>required</u> natural ventilation opening.

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