



Building Safety News

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Idaho Division of Building Safety

October 2006

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PROGRAMS COMBINED INTO ONE BUREAU

By Jean Frenette
Bureau Chief, PWCL & Industrial Safety

The Public Works Contractor Licensing and Industrial Safety Bureau have been combined with the Energy Code Advisory Program as part of a continuing reorganization of the Division of Building Safety.

This change was effective Aug. 15 with all three programs becoming part of the Operations Group under my direction as Bureau Chief.

The combination of programs licensing public works contractors, who build the schools and overseeing industrial safety, which inspects them, will increase efficiency. Working hand in hand, the bureaus will be complimentary, performing dual functions such as the safety inspectors checking for public works licenses.

A joint bureau also provides more visibility in all regions of the state and enhances outreach and the division's ability to provide the inspections demanded by

increased construction statewide. This reorganization brings in the energy specialist, provides specific up-to-date information on projects that are in the design, bid and early award stages and permits timely reviews, comments and assistance.

Each program will maintain its assigned duties. But with the various programs checking the others' responsibilities, improved efficiency and reduced time will translate into savings for the division and ultimately the people of Idaho.

I am pleased with this assignment. It will be a pleasure to work with the professionals working on these programs to assist in this expansion. The end results will be more efficiency, higher visibility, reduced costs and improved scheduling to name a few.

Visit our Web site for more information or contact me at jfrenette@dbms.idaho.gov or call me at (208) 332-8968.

DIVISION INVESTIGATES USING CONTRACT INSPECTORS

During the 2006 legislative session, the Division of Building Safety was directed to investigate the possibility of using contract inspectors. Minnesota uses contract inspectors in its electrical program, and the Legislature suggested that the division send staff to Minnesota to learn how the process works. A number of division staff visited Minnesota this past summer and came back convinced that with some modifications, Minnesota's program could work in Idaho. In addition, the Idaho Electrical Board unanimously endorsed the use of contract

inspectors in August. As a result, the division is currently developing a plan to test the use of contract inspectors in Idaho.



John McAllister,
 DBS Administrator

Contract inspectors are independent business people, who would be doing electrical, HVAC or plumbing inspections under contract with the state. Currently state employees do all those inspections. Initially a request for proposals will be created in order to competitively purchase contractor services. The intent of the request is to get the best product at the lowest cost. Since the division

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DBS PROVIDES ENERGY PROGRAM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO IDAHO SCHOOLS

By Ingo Stroup

Senior Energy Specialist

The Energy Program at the Division of Building Safety provides compliance training and technical assistance to schools and other local jurisdictions and building industry participants on the 2003 International Energy Conservation Code.

In July, a small Idaho school district complained about high energy bills and poor system performance. With a limited maintenance and operations budget, the district needed help before the building's one-year warranty expired and the new school year started. Division staff visited the school and reviewed building plans, design specifications and energy compliance reports. Additional review with the building operator identified problems with the building's HVAC systems, which included the supply and return ducts, insulation of the ductwork and the control system.

Working together with Public Work Contractor Licensing staff, division staff brought together the design engineers, the HVAC subcontractor, the mechanical system manufacturer's

representatives, the construction manager and the building operator. After verifying the documented deficiencies, all agreed the deficiencies should be fixed and pledged to work together to make the repairs before school started.

Once repairs are completed and proper system operation verified, the building operator will be trained on computer software to maximize the effectiveness, comfort and efficiency of the system. The entire system will be commissioned to verify peak performance and proper operation with a complete commissioning report submitted to the project engineer and the division. This collaboration, initiated by the Division of Building Safety, resulted in the school district receiving much improved performance at no additional cost to district patrons.

The division Energy Program is funded through a grant from the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance. This grant provides technical assistance for energy code technical and compliance issues. If you have questions concerning energy issues, please call or e-mail: Ingo Stroup at (208) 332-7153 or istroup@db.s.idaho.gov.

USING THE DBS WEB SITE: EASY ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL PERMIT INFORMATION

By Leslie R. Rogers

DBS IT Support

The Division of Building Safety's Web site at <http://db.s.idaho.gov> provides easy access to permit information.

The home page allows a visitor to select areas of interest from the left hand side, such as Energy Conservation, Logging Safety and Public Works Contractors.

The bottom of the main page is divided into three sections: online, most requested and new.

In the online section, a visitor can look up active licenses, permits and plan reviews. The last newsletter topic was licenses. This issue will be permits.

After selecting "search for a current permit," the user is taken to the department's online permit public record information data entry screen, where the search criteria such as bureau, permit type, number, state and city are provided.

The screen allows the user to enter as much or as little information as needed.

After this information is entered and the **START SEARCH** command at the bottom of this page is activated, a real time online data search is started.

When the search is completed, the permit public record information screen appears. At that point a record can be selected by clicking on the permit number or the icon to the left of the permit number. A new permit confirmation screen will appear with a print option located at the top of the screen. You can also make the "map" selection, and this will display a

Mapquest map of the permit location.

When a user finishes printing and selects close, the site returns to the permit public record information screen.

If a user wants to save the data to a local computer in an Excel format, this can be done by selecting the "sent to Excel" button at the bottom of the page.

In the next issue of the Division of Building Safety newsletter, the topic of how to access online plan reviews will be discussed.



CONTRACT INSPECTORS

From page 1

has never done a request of this sort, the initial part of this test will be a challenge. Of course, the test will use contract inspectors on a relatively small scale. This is a test of contract inspectors, not a conversion to contract inspectors.

The division will determine how to compensate contract inspectors. Minnesota compensates contract inspectors with a portion of the permit fees associated with completed electrical permits. Permits in rural areas are awarded a higher portion of the fees because rural inspections require more travel time so are more expensive for contractors. Idaho will likely follow the same model.

Probably the most critical issue is quality control. The division must not only check the quality of the contractors' work but also ascertain whether homeowners, building owners and contractors feel that the services they received from contractors were adequate and timely. Strict rules must also be implemented and enforced to prohibit conflicts of interest by preventing inspectors from engaging in the type of work they inspect. Minnesota has full-time state staff devoted to this quality control effort. They use approxi-

mately one state employee for every nine contract inspectors. Again, we will likely follow the same model.

Contract inspectors have the potential to reduce costs while increasing efficiency. The challenge is to avoid adverse impacts on the health and safety of Idaho citizens by ensuring that our system prevents fraud and abuse by unscrupulous contract inspectors.

I believe the potential benefits of this test outweigh the risks. If the test proves the efficacy of contract inspectors, then the next step will be creating a plan to completely convert to contract inspection. If the test finds otherwise, we will have facts to support the status quo. The decision to use contract inspectors should be based on the facts, and the Division of Building Safety intends to gather all the facts necessary to do just that.

This is the second edition of our quarterly Division of Building Safety newsletter. I hope you have found this publication useful. The newsletter is also available online at <http://dbs.idaho.gov/newsletter>. If you have suggestions for newsletter improvements or just wish to comment on newsletter content, please e-mail Newsletter@dbs.idaho.gov. Thank you.

WHOSE IDEA IS THIS ANYWAY? KEEPING UP ON THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE

By Jeff Fitzloff

Electrical Bureau Chief

We are now well into the 2008 National Electrical Code writing process.

I often hear statements such as why did the Idaho Electrical Board write that into the code or the manufacturers just change the code to sell new devices or that's only a problem back East. It's your code, not someone else's.

The code is one of the many documents that the National Fire Protection Association has the responsibility of keeping up to date. As a not-for-profit association, it does not have any ability to propose changes. The National Electrical Code represents a consensus and maintaining it is everyone's responsibility. The code committee is made up of the Technical Correlating Committee, which is responsible for organizing the code, and 20 panels that oversee separate code sections. The newest panel is writing a new Article 585 Critical Operations Power Systems, which will deal with systems such as state police

communications. Each panel is responsible for documents on minimizing the risk of electric shock and of electricity as a potential ignition source of fires and explosions. Each panel has a primary and alternate focus among the categories that include manufacturer, user, installer/maintainer, labor, applied research/testing laboratory, enforcing authority, insurance and consumer.



Idahoans have submitted and have been instrumental in new code language in the past, and again this time several concerned tradesmen submitted proposals by the Nov. 4, 2005, deadline. The panels making up the code committee sifted through

those proposals last January in Hilton Head, S.C. Each panel is manned by dedicated members, who devote long hours to analyzing proposed changes. The panel on grounding and bonding is a case in point. It started work on the first day of the two-week session at 7:30 a.m. with 226 proposals to consider. The panel worked until 5 p.m. and then broke into work groups that stayed at it until after 10 p.m. One evening one of the wives brought pizza in so the members could work through dinner.

The code committee's report on all the proposals has been published and mailed out. Comments on any of the proposed changes must be submitted by 5 p.m. Oct. 20. The comments and new code language will be considered by the Code Making Panel during its Nov. 28-Dec. 9 meeting, and the final vote will be March 23 during the National Fire Protection Association's World Safety Congress and Exposition. The forms and code writing schedule were published in the last 10 pages of the 2005 National Electrical Code.

So have you worked on your code yet? I have!

WHEN WILL THE 2006 EDITIONS OF THE IBC, IRC & IECC BE IN EFFECT?

By Arlan Smith

Building Plans Examiner

The 2006 editions of the International Building Code, the International Residential Code and the International Energy Conservation Code are published, but their use by the Division of Building Safety will require either an amendment to the Building Code Act or changes to administrative rules. Either way, approval by the Legislature is required. A group representing all sectors of the construction industry and government regulators is studying the issue, but at this time

it appears that legislation will be introduced this winter to adopt all three 2006 editions. If passed, these codes would normally be effective July 1, 2007, for buildings under division jurisdiction. City and county governments may have different effective dates. Local governments may adopt these new code editions even if the Legislature does not. Local governments can amend codes by ordinance to provide protection equivalent to the state adopted codes. Some local governments may regard the 2006 editions as providing protection equivalent to the 2003 editions.

DIVISION ENFORCES INDUSTRIAL SAFETY ELEVATOR PROGRAM

By Jean Frenette

Bureau Chief, PWCL & Industrial Safety

and Steve Keys

Deputy Administrator

Under the Elevator Safety Act of 2004, the Division of Building Safety registers and inspects elevators and lifting conveyances in the state. A coalition of building owners and operators, elevator companies and others developed the program.

About 2,000 elevators are registered, but the division believes there may be hundreds more that are not registered and have not been inspected.

All building owners are urged to have their conveyances inspected and registered. This requires having the elevator company mechanics initially inspect them in compliance with a prescribed procedure, which is witnessed by a Qualified Elevator Inspector. If the inspection passes, the owner will be issued a

temporary certificate to operate, which will be replaced with a permanent certificate in 60 days.



If repairs are required, elevator owners must request the final certificate after those repairs are made. Failure to complete repairs and secure the final certificate violates the law and carries a \$300 penalty. Some violations date back to 2004. The division is currently sending notices to building owners who have not completed necessary repairs.

The division is also making a concerted effort to identify unregistered elevators. To avoid penalties, register or re-register your elevator or conveyance today!

For more information please contact Jean Frenette at (208) 332-8968.

Calendar of Events

DBS/Idaho Manufactured Housing Assoc. Continuing Education Training

November 8 Lewiston
November 9 Coeur d'Alene

Telecommunications Coalitions Meeting

November 8 Nampa

Electrical Board Meeting

November 9 Nampa

Veterans' Day – Holiday – DBS closed

November 10

Thanksgiving Day – Holiday – DBS closed

November 23



Christmas Day – Holiday – DBS closed

December 25

New Years Day – Holiday – DBS closed

January 1, 2007



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON MECHANICAL CODES AND INSPECTIONS

By Russ Owen

HVAC Code Specialist

Question: *Why are the gas test pressure requirements found in the International Fuel Gas Code not accepted by my mechanical inspector?*

Answer: The requirements for gas pressure tests found in the International Fuel Gas Code Sections (406.4), (406.4.1) and (406.4.2) have been amended by IDAPA 07.07.01 Rules Governing Installation of Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Systems, Division of Building Safety. Here are those changes.

Section 406.4. was changed in the last sentence to read: Mechanical gauges used to measure test pressure shall have a range such that the highest end of the scale is not greater than two (2) times the test pressure nor lower than one and one-half (1.5) times the working pressure.

Section 406.4.1 Test Pressure. Not less than twenty (20) psig test pressure shall be required for systems with a maximum working pressure up to ten (10) inches water column. For systems with a maximum working pressure between ten (10) inches water column and ten (10) psig, not less than sixty (60) psig test pressure shall be required. For systems over ten (10) psig working pressure, minimum test pressure shall be no less than six (6) times the working pressure.

Section 406.4.2. The test duration shall not be less than twenty (20) minutes.

Question: *What are the mechanical code requirements for the protection of appliances located in a garage?*

Answer: IRC Section M1307.3.1 does not give any specific details. The section only states that protection from automobiles must be provided. Generally the acceptable practice has been to install a minimum of a two-inch diameter steel pipe. If there are two appliances located within the vehicles path of travel, a second post may be necessary. This is common for garages with larger than single car openings.

Question: *Why can't I run flexible heat ducts inside the garage?*

Answer: The International Residential Code requires all ducting within the garage to be constructed of a minimum No.26 gauge steel or equivalent. This is to help prevent the passage of undetected fire and smoke in the garage to the home.

Note that while performing inspections, some state inspectors occasionally find a supply or return plenum in the garage with flexible vibration isolators, or canvas connectors, in the duct. These connectors are not acceptable when located within the garage. If a fire started, they would have the potential to melt away, leaving an opening in the duct, which could spread the fire and smoke into the dwelling.



Question: *I am building a new house and would like to know if I have to put an exhaust fan in my bathroom since I do not want additional vent terminations in my roof or walls?*

Answer: IRC, Section 303.3 states that bathrooms, water closet compartments and similar rooms shall be provided with aggregate glazing area in windows of not less than three square feet, one-half of which must be open able.

The exception is that the glazed area shall not be required where artificial light and a mechanical ventilation system are provided.

Therefore, an exhaust fan is only applicable if a window that can be opened is not located in the room as indicated above.

The HVAC Bureau would like to remind everyone to remember to call for a final inspection, especially those who perform changeouts in existing construction and those who install hearth appliances. The division does need to check the hearth appliances when the finished materials have been applied. This is to verify that the appliances are still within all of the manufacturers' clearance requirements after the final construction finishes and trim have been applied.

DOUBLE FEES TO BE ASSESSED ON NON-PERMITTED JOBS AND UNPAID PERMITS

By Lori Larson

Permit Staff Supervisor

Effective immediately, the Division of Building Safety will strictly enforce Idaho laws and regulations doubling fees of the Electrical, Plumbing and Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditions bureaus on all non-permitted jobs and unpaid permits. The division will allow a 20-day grace period from the time it becomes aware of a job-site requiring a permit to the time a statement doubling fees is issued.

The goal is to streamline the permit process for all three bureaus by bringing together similar procedures and requirements, which will ultimately benefit Idaho's contractors, excavators and sprinkler installers. By enforcing state laws and regulations, the division can more accurately process permit and job site information as well as help state inspectors determine that the necessary provisions have been met to complete their inspections.

Here are the state laws and regulations on fees for each bureau:

Electrical Administrative Rule 07.01.01012.02.b - Failure to post Part 5 of the electrical inspection tag at the required location, or failure to submit parts No. 1 and No. 2 of such tag and the proper inspection fee to the Electrical Bureau within seven (7) calendar days from the time the electrical installation work is commenced will result in the imposition of a double inspection fee. (Adopted 7-1-97)

Plumbing Idaho Code Section 54-2620. Permits required. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, co-partnership, association or corporation to do, or cause or permit to be done, after the adoption of this act, whether acting as principal, agent or employee, any construction, installation, improvement, extension or alteration of any plumbing system in any building, residence or structure, or service lines thereto in the State of Idaho, without first procuring a

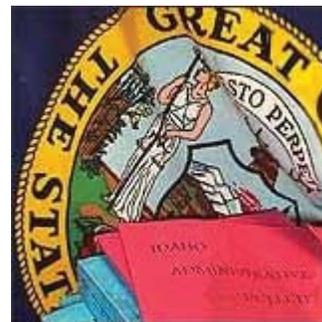
permit from the Division of Building Safety authorizing such work to be done.

Plumbing Administrative Rule 07.02.03.18. No Permit. Failure to send permit and required fee in the prescribed time will, at the discretion of the Department, result in the assessment of a double fee. (Adopted 7-11-89)

HVAC Idaho Code Section 54-5015.4. No permit. Failure to acquire, post and send permit and to pay required fees in the prescribed time may result in the assessment of a double fee. Any additional offenses within a twelve (12) month period for failure to acquire, post and send permit and to pay required fees in the prescribed time shall result in the assessment of a triple fee.

In summary, the plumbing and HVAC bureaus require permits to be submitted and paid prior to work starting. The Electrical Bureau requires permit and payment within seven days of work starting. The division realizes this is not always feasible, but the 20-day grace period should be sufficient time to submit permit and payment or acquire a permit from the division, if necessary. Plumbing and electrical permit books are available in the division's Meridian office, and HVAC permit application base fees can be paid in advance so contractors, excavators and installers can always have permits on hand.

For more information on the Division of Building Safety and complete laws and regulations for all the bureaus, visit our Web site at dbs.idaho.gov. If you have any questions regarding this requirement, please contact Lori Larson at (208) 332-8995.



Administrative rules are available online at <http://adm.idaho.gov/>



! ATTENTION ! – BOARD MEMBER OPPORTUNITIES

The Division of Building Safety is soliciting applications from qualified individuals interested in serving on the Public Works Contractor Licensing Board or Plumbing Board. Licensed construction managers and professional engineers are encouraged to apply for the two positions on the Public Works Contractors Licensing Board opening in January. For more information, contact Jean Frenette at (208) 332-8968.

Licensed Journeymen Plumbers and members of the public at large are encouraged to apply for vacant seats on the Plumbing Board. Contact Steve Keys at 332-8986 if you have questions concerning the Plumbing Board vacancies.

All applications should be mailed to the Governor's office or filed online through the Governor's boards and commissions Web page at <http://gov.idaho.gov/boards/boards.cfm>. Applicants are also urged to submit a copy of their application to the Administrator of the Division of Building Safety.

THE REORGANIZATION OF CLERICAL STAFF - A SUCCESS STORY

By Marsi Woody

Deputy Administrator

For years the licensing staffs in both the Electrical and Plumbing bureaus struggled to handle the annual renewal rush. Many know the delays in receiving licenses as the over-matched staff dealt with an overwhelming volume of renewals. In the past few years, delays of up to two months occurred before all the licensing renewals were finalized.

Last fall, however, the Electrical, HVAC and Plumbing bureaus' licensing personnel were combined and began cross-training, knowing the critical test would be the electrical licensing renewal expiration date of July 31.

The licensing team surpassed all expectations, and the renewal process was essentially complete by the first week of August. Staff members at that time were processing "clean" renewals within a day of receiving the applications in the mail. Hopefully, licensees recognized this positive change.

Seeing the teams come together and realize the benefits of cross-training and working together, even across bureaus, underscores the efforts to initiate positive change at the Division of Building Safety. Staff members are now able to take a day or two off without coming back to a depressing load of work piled up on their desks. Best of all, customer service is enhanced.

Thanks go to all the members of the Office Services Group for their efforts in achieving this success. This group is headed by Cathy Skidmore with Renee Bryant leading the



licensing team, Lori Larson leading the permits team and Kim McDonald leading the inspector support team. For future reference, they can be reached at:

Cathy Skidmore, 332-4003, cskidmore@dbs.idaho.gov

Renee Bryant, 332-7137, rbryant@dbs.idaho.gov

Lori Larson, 332-8995, llarson@dbs.idaho.gov

Kim McDonald, 332-7134, kmcdonald@dbs.idaho.gov

The Office Services Group, especially the Licensing Team, deserves congratulations and continued support in the division's efforts to better serve you, the customers.

PROMOTIONS AT DBS

Kim McDonald was named supervisor of the Inspector Support and Customer Service component of the Office Services Group. McDonald previously worked in the Manufactured Housing Program and prior to that as administrative assistant in the Electrical Bureau.

Jean Frenette has been named bureau chief in charge of Public Works Contractor Licensing, Industrial and School Safety and the Energy Advisory Program. Frenette previously served as the Public Works Contractor Licensing Program Manager. Prior to that he worked for many years in the construction business.

Jeff Fitzloff has been appointed chief of the Electrical Bureau. Fitzloff succeeds Gary Malmen, who is staying on and assisting with the transition in

leadership of the Electrical Bureau. Fitzloff has previously served as electrical code specialist, supervisor of electrical inspectors, area supervisor and electrical inspector.

Chris Critser has been appointed supervisor for Plumbing Area 4, moving up from inspector.

Rick Brown, who previously served as a plumbing inspector, is now supervisor for Plumbing Area 3.

Lamont Gibson is now serving as supervisor for Electrical Area 4, moving up from inspector.

NEW HIRES AT DBS

Louie Konkol has been hired as a Principal Financial Specialist. Konkol comes to the division from the State Controller's office and previously worked for the Department of Lands.

Adriana Burton is new to the division, working as a licensing clerk in the Office Services Group.

Pam Magee is the new clerical support person in Manufactured Housing.

Tracy Seganos is the new technical records specialist in Public Works Contractor Licensing.

Allen Norton has joined the permitting operation of the Offices Services Group.

Dick Sivey is the new electrical inspector in Valley County, and Brad Hastings has that job in Teton County

Brett Bogardus is the new HVAC inspector in Gem County.

Dave Hiatt has joined the division as a financial specialist, coming from the Parks and Recreation Department.



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Mission Statement

Promoting health, safety and welfare by ensuring compliance with statewide building, energy conservation, public works contractors, industrial and elevator safety, logging, electrical, plumbing & HVAC codes, standards and regulations.