



Office of Facilities Planning Newsletter #38 – April 2003

Door Wedges Continued:

In our last Newsletter we added a few lines regarding doors and specifically wrote "wood wedges holding corridor doors open are never allowed". We learned that one school official immediately went around the school picking up all the wood wedges and replaced them with rubber wedges. This is not meant to embarrass anyone, but to point out what the safety requirements are.

We used the material wood as an example because it is the most common wedge material used in comparison to all other materials combined. Let us restate ourselves... WEDGES HOLDING CORRIDOR DOORS OPEN ARE NEVER ALLOWED. Any material like wood, rubber, or cardboard, and any shape such as wedges, concrete blocks, bricks, safety cones, or anything else you can think of to prop in front of a corridor door for the purpose of holding a corridor door open are all not allowed. This also applies to any other make-shift device like bungee chords, strings, straps, and hangers that might also be used for holding a corridor door open are also not allowed.

Therefore, no matter where it is or who put it there, any wedge or other materials placed for the purpose of holding a corridor door open should always be removed and never replaced. Please note that a door closer is a safety device that is intended to help protect the corridor escape route from becoming smoke filled. Installing a wedge of any material, shape or kind, in a door to override the closer could be considered a willful act to defeat a safety device. The intent of the Manual of Planning Standards is safe and quick exiting.

Pool Locker Room Exits:

We have been contacted by a representative of the New York State Department of Health regarding locker room exits and exiting through pools. In short, no exit can lead into a pool. It is a violation of and in conflict with Section 6-1.16(a) of the State Sanitary Code. In addition, for this same reason, the pool cannot be used as an emergency egress route to conform to smoke zone exiting as required in the Manual of Planning Standards.

The State Sanitary Code requires a pool to be supervised and when not supervised nobody is allowed in the pool area. Exiting through the pool area when it is not supervised is a violation. The Health Department does not consider a door alarm or similar device as an acceptable alternative to keeping the door locked and access to the pool prevented when the pool is not supervised. If you have further questions you can contact the New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Community Sanitation and Food Protection at (518) 402-7600

Health Department Inspection:

As a follow up to pools, this is a good time to remind everyone that Health Department requirements must be complied with everywhere. Even in the instances when County permits and inspections are required. Please be sure you are including this in your specifications. The Health Department has requirements for sanitary systems, kitchens, pools and other systems that will require permits and inspections. These inspections must all be completed before the Architect or Engineer completes the SED Certificate of Substantial Completion (CSC) and prior to use or occupancy of the effected spaces or systems.

At the same time the project design firm and contractors are responsible to follow any other existing laws and regulations that may require permits. The SED building permit is contingent upon your receipt of other appropriate permits.

Using the International Building Code:

So, you're doing a simple roof project – piece of cake – or is it? Previously, if you made sure the roofing was Class A and had an average insulating R-value of 20; you were in like Flynn. But what does the new code require?

First the Energy Conservation Construction Code of New York State. Does it apply?

If you are replacing more than 50 percent of an existing roofing system within a 12-month period, the answer is YES. This applies to projects where the existing roofing and exterior insulation are removed. If the roof has no insulation above the deck (outside) but does have insulation below the deck (inside), then NO (section 101.4.2.4, Exception 3).

So you determine the Energy Code applies. You head for the tables at the back of the book. Your project is in zone 15 with 30% glazing, metal joist/truss roof assembly is an average R-value of R-20, no change? Not exactly, section 802.2.4, the paragraph that sent you to the chart says "The minimum thermal resistance..." not the average. Big change! Especially if your project is in Zone 15 or 16. An R-23 or R-24 is the minimum R-value required over the entire roof! It is not the average of the entire roof.

What about the Building Code of New York State?

Chapter 15 - Roof Assemblies and Rooftop Structures, Section 1504 addresses wind resistance of roof decks and roof coverings. There are also specific test requirements based on the roofing system selected. The testing requirements must be included in the specifications.

Section 1505 allows roofing assemblies to be Class A, B or C. This is not a cost savings potential. SED will not approve anything less than a Class A.

Section 1507 has all sorts of requirements for roof coverings. Once you get past the wood shingles, etc., you will find the more traditional commercial roof types. Again, more test requirements to include in the specifications.

Section 1508 – roof insulation test requirements. This section requires tests or sends you to Chapters 26 and 23 if you are utilizing plastic or cellulose products.

Section 1510 addresses Re-roofing. This Section says you have to comply with the entire chapter 15. The only exception is relief from the 1/4" per foot slope.

What about that Appendix K – can I do less using that?

Removal and replacement of existing materials that serve the same purpose is a Renovation. K503.2 requires parapet bracing for unreinforced masonry buildings whose Seismic Design Category is D, E, or F whenever a re-roofing permit is issued. This throws you back to the Structural Design Chapter 16. But before you go there, make sure what you have is actually a parapet, 30 inches high. What you may have is a fancy 16-inch masonry gravel stop.

Isn't the new code fun? Oh, a bonus item we think you need to look at... this new roof with a great insulating system is now going to let more snow and ice sit up on the roof. We recommend you have your structural engineer make sure the building will support it.

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