



NC Plumbing Code

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202 - Question: I have heard the definition of a "Water Service Line" has changed?

Answer: Yes, effective Jan 1, 2020 the definition was changed. The "5 feet outside the building" was deleted. Now the "Water Service Line" is up to the first shutoff.

301.3 - Question: Can a bathtub drain be tied indirect to a hub drain or floor drain in a bathroom, with a curbless shower where all flooring is tiled & waterproofed?

Answer: No, section 301.3 NCPC and P2601.2 NCRC require fixtures to be directly connected to the sanitary drainage system, unless the connection is required to be an indirect connection by code.

301.3 Connections to drainage system. Plumbing fixtures, drains, appurtenances and appliances used to receive or discharge liquid waste or sewage shall be directly connected to the sanitary drainage system of the building or premises, in accordance with the requirements of this code. This section shall not be construed to prevent indirect waste systems required by Chapter 8.



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305.4 - Question: I have heard the code was changed back to a 12 inch burial depth, is this true?

Answer: Yes, in September 2019 the BCC approved a code change both in the residential code and the commercial code, to remove the 6 inch below frost line requirement. From there it had to be reviewed and approved by the "Rules and Review Commission". We received confirmation January 2020 the code changes were approved by the review commission with an effective date of January 1, 2021. Since this is an approved and adopted change, we can accept this and an alternate until the effective date.

312.2 - Question: Can I use the 3 foot above the highest drainage fitting on a commercial job?

Answer: No, the exception in 312.2 NCPC allows the rough plumbing to be tested with 3 foot of water above the highest drainage fitting is only for one- and two-family dwellings.

312.2 Drainage and vent water test. A water test shall be

applied to the drainage system within the building either in its entirety or in sections. If applied to the entire system, all openings in the piping shall be tightly closed, except the highest opening, and the system shall be filled with water to the point of overflow. If the system is tested in sections, each opening shall be tightly plugged except the highest openings of the section under test, and each section shall be filled with water, but no section shall be tested with less than a 10-foot (3048 mm) head of water. In testing successive sections, at least the upper 10 feet (3048 mm) of the next preceding section shall be tested so that no joint or pipe in the building, except the uppermost 10 feet (3048 mm) of the system, shall have been submitted to a test of less than a 10-foot (3048 mm) head of water. This pressure shall be held for at least 15 minutes. The system shall then be tight at all points.



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Exception: Rough plumbing testing for one- and two-family dwellings shall be as specified above except the water level shall be a minimum of 3 feet (914 mm) above the highest drainage fitting.

312.2 - Question: Is the vent section of a plumbing system required to be tested?

Answer: Yes, Section 312.2 requires a water test on sections of the drainage systems within the building of at least 10 foot of head, except for the uppermost 10 feet of the system. The heading specifies drainage and vent water test. The section also has an exception for one and two family dwellings, allowing a 3 foot head above the highest drainage fitting. This exception does not apply to commercial projects. An air test is also allowed per section 312.3 NCPC.

312.5 - Question: With the change in the definition of "Water Service" and the decision from NCDOT to allow the water service material 1 foot AFF, would this "Water Service" line need to be tested?

Answer: Section 312.5 NCPC states the "Water Distribution" needs to be tested. However, this requirement was in the code before the definition was changed and the intent was to have water lines in the building tested. With the definition change, the water service can now be run under the building and extend 1 foot AFF. The Task Team discussed this and decided if the water service line section under the building contained no joints and was one piece, then no test was required. If it did contain joints, then it would need to be tested before covered.

403.2 - Question: I have heard there was a code change that increased the allowance for a unisex restroom from 25 occupants to 30 occupants. Is this true? If so, when can designers start using it?

Answer: Yes, there was a code change that moved the threshold for a unisex restroom from 25 to 30 occupants for a Business occupancy only in July 2020.



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This was processed by the Rules and Review Committee in September 2020 with an effective date of January 1, 2021. Since this has been cleared by the Rules and Review Committee, it can be used as an alternate now if the designer requests it. This does not need to go through the AAM process, the designer would need to put a statement on the plans they are using the approved code change. At state, this change only applies to a "Business" occupancy, all other occupancies remain at 25 occupants.

405.8 - Question: I was turned down for using a 2 inch Slip Joint trap on a washing machine standpipe. The inspector said it was not allowed, is this correct?

Answer: Section 405.8 NCPC does not prohibit the use of slip joint connections on the trap outlet, trap inlet and within the trap seal. When a slip joint is used, access must be provide to the fitting. They would not be allowed in a wall without an access panel.

405.8 Slip joint connections. Slip joints shall be made with an approved elastomeric gasket and shall only be installed on the trap outlet, trap inlet and within the trap seal. Fixtures with concealed slip-joint connections shall be provided with an access panel or utility space not less than 12 inches (305 mm) in its smallest dimension or other approved arrangement so as to provide access to the slip joint connections for inspection and repair. Where such access cannot be provided, access doors shall not be required, provided that all joints are soldered, solvent cemented or screwed to form a solid connection.

412.4 - Question: Are public laundries required to have a floor drain?

Answer: Yes. 412.5. In public coin operated laundries and in the central washing facilities of multiple-family dwellings, the rooms containing automatic clothes washers shall be provided with floor drains located to readily drain the entire floor area. Such drains shall have a minimum outlet of not less than three inches.



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417.3 - Question: Is it acceptable to remove a bathtub and install shower in it's place, keeping the 1.5 inch drain for the tub?

Answer: Yes, The exception to 417.3 allows pre-existing 1.5 inch waste outlets to be used when installing a shower in place of a tub.

417.3 Shower waste outlet. Waste outlets serving showers shall be at least 2 inches (51 mm) in diameter and, for other than waste outlets in bathtubs, shall have removable strainers not less than 3 inches (76 mm) in diameter with strainer openings not less than 1/4 inch (6.4 mm) in minimum dimension. Where each shower space is not provided with an individual waste outlet, the waste outlet shall be located and the floor pitched so that waste from one shower does not flow over the floor area serving another shower. Waste outlets shall be fastened to the waste pipe in an approved manner.

Exception: Retaining pre-existing 1 1/2 inch (38.1 mm) in diameter waste outlets shall be permitted when removing an existing bathtub and installing in its place a shower.

502.1.1 - Question: I installed a water heater in a room that opens to the garage. The room had a weather sealed door and a closer. I was turned down because the ignition source was not elevated 18 inches above the garage floor. Is this right, it is in a separate room.

Answer: Section 502.1.1 NCPC references back to the Mechanical and Fuel Gas Code for ignition elevation and protection requirements.

Section 304.3 NCMC requires all ignition sources to be elevated 18 inches above the garage floor. It also states a room that is accessed only from the garage is considered part of the garage. There are no exceptions for weather sealed doors or closers. Any installations in the room, would need to meet the same requirements as if installed in the garage.



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Plumbing Code

502.1.1 Elevation and protection. Elevation of water heater ignition sources and mechanical damage protection requirements for water heaters shall be in accordance with the International Mechanical Code and the International Fuel Gas Code.

Mechanical Code

304.3 Elevation of ignition source. Equipment and appliances having an ignition source and located in hazardous locations and public garages, private garages, repair garages, automotive motor fuel-dispensing facilities and parking garages shall be elevated such that the source of ignition is not less than 18 inches (457 mm) above the floor surface on which the equipment or appliance rests. For the purpose of this section, rooms or spaces that are not part of the living space of a dwelling unit and that communicate directly with a private garage through openings shall be considered to be part of the private garage.

502.3 - Question: If a furnace and a water heater are installed in an attic. Could they be installed opposite each other and share the required 30 x 30 service space?

Answer: Yes, we can find nothing that would prohibit this installation. All clearances from the manufacturer would need to be met for both appliances. The 30 x 30 service space would be available to either appliance.

504.7 - Question: Is a pan required under a 6 or 10 gallon water heater installed in a cabinet, sitting on a concrete floor?

Answer: Section 504.7 NCPD states 5 instances when a pan is required, all separated by a comma and the final separation is the word "or". each section of those 5 items stands alone. If above occupied space; then a pan is required, regardless if the leak could cause structural damage. Exception #2 does state you



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can install a water heater without a pan on a concrete floor, but the floor has to have a floor drain. This has been clarified with NCDOL.

602.1 - Question: Charlotte Water is several weeks out getting the water main run to our project. Can we get a TCO to occupy the building until the water main is installed?

Answer: No, A TCO is a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy. Issuing a TCO means the building can safely support the occupants. This would include items like egress, lighting, ventilation and sanitary conditions. Without a water supply, the required plumbing fixtures would be inoperable.

602.1 General. Structures equipped with plumbing fixtures and utilized for human occupancy or habitation shall be provided with a potable supply of water in the amounts and at the pressures specified in this chapter.

604.4.1 - Question: Where are metering faucets required?

Answer: They are required in public restrooms with 6 or more lavatories, Education and Assembly occupancies. See code Section 604.4.1 NCPC
604.4.1 Lavatory faucets. Lavatory faucets shall be of the metering type when located in the following public restrooms:

1. In all occupancies in restrooms which have six or more lavatories.
2. In school occupancies in student-use restrooms.
3. In assembly occupancies in all customer or public-use restrooms.

605.22 - Question: Where can stack expansion joints be installed on a multi-story building?

Answer: Section 605.22 only allows mechanical joints below grade, unless otherwise approved. After discussing with NCDOL, these expansion joints can be installed at the base of the stack on the first floor. This will limit the damage if



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they leak and at the same time absorb movement when/if the building settles or shrinks.

605.3 - Question: Why does Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement not accept C900 PVC? It has been used for Utility installations for many years and is a reliable product.

Answer: The basis for not accepting C900 is, it is not listed on the Table 605.3 in the plumbing code. Section 605.3 states piping shall conform to the standards listed in Table 605.3. C900 pipe is a PVC compound that meets ASTM D 1784 in most cases. ASTM D 1784 is not a standard listed on Table 605.3.

605.4 - Question: Since the definition of a "Water Service Line" has changed and now extends to the first shutoff, change PVC be run in the building to the first shutoff?

Answer: We consulted with NCDOL on this question. They said PVC would be allowed 1 foot AFF for slab on grade, and extend 1 foot into crawlspaces or basements. After the allowed 1 foot, the material would need to change over to one listed in Table 605.4 for "Water Distribution".

607.1.1 - Question: Can a thermostat on a water heater be used in lieu of the mixing valve?

Answer: No, Section 607.1.1 prohibits the use of the thermostat on the water heater as serving as the temperature limiting means.

607.1.1 Temperature limiting means. A thermostat control for a water heater shall not serve as the temperature limiting means for the purposes of complying with the requirements of this code for maximum allowable hot or tempered water delivery temperature at fixtures.

607.3 - Question: Are expansion tanks required for a like for like water heater?



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Answer: Yes, an expansion tank would be required if a checkvalve, PRV or backflow device are installed on the system. See NCDOI interpretation.

608.16.1 - Question: Is it allowable to use a backflow preventer that conforms to ASSE 1032 for carbonated beverage dispensers?

Answer: No, while the ASSE 1032 backflow devices are marketed for carbonated beverage dispensers, the code only recognizes the ASSE 1022 standard.

702.1 - Question: Does flexible pipe conform to code?

Answer: No, Table 702.1 NCPC requires above ground drainage pipe to meet standards. These flexible pipes have not been shown to comply with any of the required standards.

702.1 - Question: I work with several out of state designers, and they usually are not aware of the use of plastic piping in a high rise being prohibited. Is this requirement unique to North Carolina?

Answer: Yes, when you look at section 702.1 NCPC, it states materials must comply with those listed in Table 702.1. North Carolina added an exception (indicated by being underlined) adding restrictions on the use of plastic pipe in a high rise. The restrictions only apply to drainage piping and can also be found in Chapter 11 for roof drainage.

P3005.2.2 - Question: In single family, is a sewer cleanout required at the street, if the street is less than a 100 feet from the cleanout at the junction of the building sewer and building drain?

Answer: Section P3005.2.2 NCRC or 708.1.2 NCPC only requires cleanouts every 100 feet for pipe sizes less than 8 inches. If the required cleanout at the junction



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of the building sewer and building drain is less than 100 feet from the street, an additional cleanout would not be required under the plumbing code. There are general statutes that require a cleanout at the property line between the public sewer and the private sewer. Charlotte Water does enforce this requirement.

708.1.10 - Question: How far above grade are cleanout caps required to be?

Answer: Section 708.1.10 states cleanouts need to be at grade level. There is no requirement for the cleanout to be above grade. It must be accessible. We do allow cleanouts that will be located in a driveway to be located in a valve box. If located in a box, all clearances must be maintained.

712.3.5 - Question: Where is a sump discharge allowed to tie into the building drainage system?

Answer: Section 712.3.5 NCPC changed in the 2018 code. It allows pumps to connect to building sewer, building drain, soil stack, waste stack or horizontal branch drain. The previous code edition limited connection to the building sewer or building drain.

712.3.5 Pump connection to the drainage system. Pumps connected to the drainage system shall connect to a building sewer, building drain, soil stack, waste stack or horizontal branch drain. Where the discharge line connects into horizontal drainage piping, the connection shall be made through a wye fitting into the top of the drainage piping and such wye fitting shall be located not less than 10 pipe diameters from the base of any soil stack, waste stack or fixture drain.

802.3 - Question: I am providing a hub drain for condensate. The air handler will be accessed by an access panel screwed to the wall. The inspector is telling me the hub drain would not be allowed behind the access panel. What is the difference between this and having a hub drain in a mechanical closet?



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Answer: Section 802.3 requires waste receptors to have ready access. The access panel will be removed by removing the screws, which will require a tool. In the mechanical closet, no special equipment or tools are required to access the hub drain; simply open the door and walk in.

802.3 Waste receptors. Every waste receptor shall be of an approved type. A removable strainer or basket shall cover the waste outlet of waste receptors. Waste receptors shall be installed in ventilated spaces. Waste receptors shall not be installed in concealed spaces. Waste receptors shall not be installed in plenums, crawl spaces, attics, interstitial spaces above ceilings and below floors. Ready access shall be provided to waste receptors.

802.3 - Question: I was recently turned down in plan review for installing a hub drain in the mechanical room of a dwelling in an apartment complex. It was stated that waste receptors is not allowed in plenums. I thought the mechanical room in a dwelling was exempt. Can you explain?

Answer: A plenum is defined as an enclosed portion of the building structure, other than an occupiable space being conditioned, that is designed to allow air movement, and thereby serve as part of an air distribution system. Section 602.2.1 of the mechanical code does have an exemption that exempts materials in a plenum of a dwelling; but it is still a plenum. This requirement comes from Section 802.3 NCPC and specifically prohibits waste receptors in a plenum. This was a code change from the 2012 NC codes to the 2018 NC codes.

901.2.1 - Question: Does the added verbiage “All fixtures discharging downstream from a water closet shall be individually vented except as provided by Section 911” override section 914 circuit venting once downstream of a WC? The IPC commentary has multiple illustrations incorporating circuit venting both with and downstream of WC?



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Answer: If you go back and check the previous code language. In the 2012 NCPC section 901.2.1 references section 911, but 911 in the 2012 is Circuit Venting. In the 2018 code, Circuit Venting was moved to section 914, but section 901.2.1 was not updated and still references 911, which is now common vents. The exception is for Circuit Venting, not common vents. This is a typo in the code.

903.6 - Question: Is it acceptable to run the plumbing vent through a wall instead of the roof?

Answer: Yes, This is sometimes necessary. It would be a better installation on a metal building to run the plumbing vent through a gable wall instead of penetrating the metal roof.

903.6 Extension through the wall. Vent terminals extending through the wall shall terminate a minimum of 10 feet (3048 mm) from the lot line and 10 feet (3048 mm) above average ground level. Vent terminals shall not terminate under the overhang of a structure with soffit vents. Side wall vent terminals shall not terminate horizontally to prevent birds or rodents from entering or blocking the vent opening.

904.2 - Question: I am designing a 5 story building. The bottom bathroom group connects to the building drain and not the stack. Would a vent stack still be required?

Answer: No, Section 904.2 NCPC requires a vent stack for 5 or more branch intervals on a drainage stack. If the bottom bathroom group is connecting to the building drain and not the stack, that would only leave 4 branch intervals on the stack and would not require a stack vent.

904.4 - Question: I received a comment on a plan review that my vent stack connection was too close to the stack. Can you explain?



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Answer: Section 904.4 NCPC allows 2 areas for connecting a vent stack. The first is on the stack, below the lowest horizontal branch. The second is on the building drain, but this connection must be 10 times the diameter of the drainage stack. If your stack is a 4 inch, then the vent stack connection would a minimum of 40 inches from the drainage stack.

905.6 - Question: If I rough in for future fixtures, am I required to rough in a vent for them as well?

Answer: Section 905.6 NCPC does require a vent to be to be roughed in for future fixtures. The vent rough-in requirement of this section is intended to make sure that a venting means will be available in advance of the future fixture installation. It also eliminates the cost and hardship associated with the installation of vent piping at the time fixtures are installed. It is common to find that fixtures have been installed without vents because a vent was not provided for future use. Note that a future fixture rough-in may be served by a wet vent, common vent, waste stack vent, circuit vent, combination drain and vent or an air admittance valve; therefore, a dry vent rough-in may not be required.

909.1 - Question: How far from a vent can a water closet be?

Answer: Section 909.1 NCPC requires the fixture to meet Table 909.1 for trap arm distance. If the water closet is on a 3 inch drain line, the maximum distance from the vent would be 12 feet and 16 feet for a 4 inch line. Self-siphoning fixtures, such as water closets and siphon action urinals, can have an unlimited distance from the trap weir to the vent. The maximum distance between the trap weir and the vent is to protect the trap against self-siphoning. Fixtures that depend on



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siphon action for proper operation will operate properly no matter how far the vent is located from the fixture.

1003.4 - Question: We have used pumps with oil sensing technology for years in elevator shafts. We are now being told these pumps must pump to a tank, is that correct?

Answer: Yes, section 1003.4 NCPC requires oil minder style pumps to pump the oil to a temporary storage tank. There are 2 designs for oil minder style pumps (pumps with oil sensing technology). In the first, the oil floats on top of the water and the pump runs until the oil is sensed and then the pump stops. If the water level rises and the pump will come back on. The second operates like the first, except the pump stopping, it switches to a different pump stage/pump and the oil is pumped to a tank. This what the code is requiring.

1003.6 - Question: Section 1003.6 exception 2 allows a washer designed for an individual dwelling unit that is not installed in a dwelling unit to be exempt for the lint interceptor requirement. The commentary discusses this as a washer located not in a dwelling unit but a common area such as a laundry room. My question is, would this apply to a residential-style appliance installed in a health club?

Answer: We interpret this code section as allowing one domestic clothes washer without an interceptor. A health club, beauty shop, doctors office are all examples where you could have one domestic washer. If more than one is installed, then an interceptor would be required.

1003.6 Clothes washer discharge interceptor. Clothes washers shall discharge through an interceptor that is provided with a wire basket or similar device, removable for cleaning, that prevents passage into the drainage system of solids 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) or larger in size, string, rags, buttons or other materials detrimental to the public sewage system.



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Exceptions:

1. Clothes washers in individual dwelling units shall not be required to discharge through an interceptor.
2. A single clothes washer designed for use in individual dwelling units and installed in a location other than an individual dwelling unit shall not be required to discharge through an interceptor.

1003.6 - Question: Can multiple washing machines drain through one lint trap?

Answer: Yes, the code does not prohibit multiple washing machines from sharing a larger lint interceptor that is properly sized for the number of machines. This is a common practice in laundry areas of a multi-family buildings.

1101.4 - Question: I am installing a storm drainage system in a building. There are several conductors that pass through the building. I am being told I have to test each one. This isn't the sanitary system, only storm.

Answer: Section 1101.4 refers you to section 312. Section 312 requires a water test on the drainage system within the building.

1101.4 Tests. The conductors and the building storm drain shall be tested in accordance with Section 312.

312.2 Drainage and vent water test. A water test shall be applied to the drainage system within the building either in its entirety or in sections.

Policy - Question: Is a drain required for an outside hose bib supplied with hot water?

Answer: We have worked with Mecklenburg County Storm Water to provide an answer to this question. Unless provided at a mop sink, outside hose bibs (hot or cold) do not require a sanitary connection. However, if an outdoor shower is supplied with hot water, a drain connected to sanitary is required.



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Manufacture's Installation - Question: Is the vent port on an ASSE 1022 device required to go to a drain?

Answer: Yes, we have spoken to both Watts and Zurn, they both want the vent port taken to a drain with an air gap. They both state if the backflow preventer locked open, it could potentially discharge a significant amount of water.

Other - Question: Are overflows required on lavatories?

Answer: No, The standards use to require them, but they were changed between 2006 and 2009.

2009 IPC Commentary

"Standards previously required lavatories to have an overflow; however, that is not currently the case. The provision of an overflow and its location is an option of the manufacturer. The reason for eliminating the overflow requirement was the lack of use, which resulted in the growth of bacteria and microorganisms."

R403.5 Energy Code - Question: Does a hot water circulating loop need to be insulated in a conditioned crawlspace?

Answer: Yes, Section R403.5 NCECC requires all circulating service hot water piping to be insulated to a minimum of R-2. This code section does not state in conditioned space, therefore it applies to any installation.

R403.5 Service hot water systems. All circulating service hot water piping shall be insulated to at least R-2. Circulating hot water systems shall include an automatic or readily accessible manual switch that can turn off the hot water circulating pump when the system is not in use.