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BULLETIN 94-9

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Subject: Accepted Engineering Practice

Reference: N.J.A.C. 5:23-3.6

There have been instances where the use of accepted engineering practice as a code enforcement tool has been confusing. For example, inspectors have on some occasions cited aesthetic provisions contained in referenced standards, rather than the provisions for which the standard is being referenced.

The intent of the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) is to eliminate obsolete, conflicting, and unnecessary construction regulations that tend to unnecessarily increase construction costs. In order to eliminate any possible confusion regarding the proper use of accepted engineering practice, the following guidelines have been established:

1. In the absence of provisions not specifically contained in any subcode, the specifications and standards listed in each subcode, or its appendix herein adopted, shall be deemed to represent accepted engineering practice. For example, paneling in a single-family home must be made of a Class III material and tested in accordance with ASTM E84. The type of paneling (walnut, cherry, oak, etc.) is inconsequential to conformance with the UCC.
2. In the absence of such standards, manufacturers' recommendations shall constitute accepted engineering practice. When products are not specifically addressed by the adopted codes or referenced standards, they should be installed in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations. Manufacturers' recommendations are also enforceable when they are directly cited in the adopted subcode. This occurs quite often in the Mechanical Subcode. Specific examples where the Mechanical Subcode refers to manufacturers' recommendations include Section 603.11 for clearance to combustibles for heating ducts connected to a furnace, Section 304.1 for mechanical equipment installations, and Section 801.5 for installation of special vent systems.
3. Accepted practice and industry standards are to be employed in the absence of provisions not contained in the adopted codes, referenced standards, or manufacturer's recommendations. The Building Subcode permits special structures such as chemical plants, packing plants, grain elevators, refineries, and flour mills to be constructed in accordance with recognized practices and requirements of the specific industry. For example, automobile assembly plants would have a difficult time in conforming to the Building Subcode's travel distance requirements for egress.

Accepted practice and industry standards also apply to certain elevator devices. The elevating and conveying devices described in Section 3004.4 of the Building Subcode, which are not included within the scope of the Elevator Safety Subcode, are under the jurisdictional authority of the construction official. For such devices, the Building Subcode permits the employment of industry standards and, in their absence, manufacturer practices. For such projects, the elevator subcode official can most appropriately advise the construction official as to whether or not there is a need for special technical services, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.19 and 2.20.