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ENGINEERING NEWSLETTER



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Evaluations Services Section Issues First Evaluation

The DOI Evaluation Services Section (ESS) is charged with researching methods and materials that are not necessarily addressed in the prescriptive codes or that have been noted as often being approved or installed in a non-code-compliant way. After researching a subject area, ESS will produce documents to assist the building officials, designers, contractors, vendors and manufacturers with understanding what is required by code or what should be considered in determining if the proposed product or method of construction is an approvable alternate method or material in accordance with NCAPC Section 105.

The topics submitted to ESS for evaluation originate with building officials. While your jurisdiction may not currently be having a problem with the product group or construction method, the department may have , prompting the need for these evaluations. **Specific vendors' products will not be evaluated or approved by DOI.**

Currently, there are many evaluations in progress. Evaluations will be updated periodically based on adopted Code changes, submission of additional test data, etc.

The first evaluation has been completed by ESS and is now posted on the DOI website. The product group is *Trowel, Roller or Spray Applied, Water-Resistive Barrier for Exterior Walls*. You can access this evaluation or any future evaluations at http://www.ncdoi.com/OSFM/Engineering/engineering_evaluations.asp

ESS welcomes your questions and feedback on any evaluation. Send your comments to susan.gentry@ncdoi.gov

Computer Based Inspector Certification Testing

Important Updates

Accessibility Questions: Test forms for the Building I, II and III exams will be updated on March 1st to include accessibility provisions out of the 2009 NC Building Code rather than the former 2004 NC Accessibility Code (NCAC) Volume 1-C. The letter you receive after successfully registering for an exam will include this information and will list what specific reference materials are allowed into the testing site. To be clear, the 2004 NCAC will be permitted into the test prior to March 1st only. After that date, all accessibility questions will be referenced out of the 2009 NC Building Code. Note that questions from ICC/ANSI A117.1-03 are not included on the test since ANSI is a standard and ANSI will not be allowed into the test site.

Use of Key Word Indexes during Exams: The NC Code Officials Qualification Board has considered the use of key word indexes during exams. Their decision has been to limit index use to that which is original to each Code book. No other indexes are allowed into the exam.

Use of Tabs during Exams: The Board has also discussed the use of tabs in code books at their December meeting. As a clarification point, the tabs that are included when you purchase the book are allowed as well as any full page pre-printed tabs purchased for the North Carolina State Building Codes. No handwritten or home-made tabs will be usable during the exams at the Pearson VUE sites.

Exam Scoring: Prior to the outsourcing of examinations, all test scores were based on a raw score where each question was worth the same amount of credit regardless of the level of difficulty. The score consisted of the number of questions answered correctly divided by the number of total questions. The passing score was 70.

When the Board outsourced the administration of the exams, it also asked for a psychometrically sound exam which adds to the credibility and defensibility of the exams. Part of the psychometric development of exams included assessing each question based on its difficulty for each level. The difficulty rating of each question is used in developing the overall level needed to achieve a “passing” score. The use of the difficulty rating per question is called scaling. Scaling provides equality between each examinee because each exam consists of different questions. If an examinee receives an exam composed of more difficult questions, the level needed to achieve a “passing” score is different from an examinee who received an exam composed of easier questions.

Current tests are not scaled as we collect data and review them to assess the accuracy of the difficulty ratings assigned to specific questions. We expect to complete our review in the coming months. Based on this information, scaling will be instituted as of September 1, 2010. A notice will be sent to all inspection departments.

Staff and E-mail Addresses

Please feel free to contact staff with any questions on testing, certification, continuing education or investigations.

E-mail addresses for the Board’s staff are as follows:

Samantha Ewens, PE, Director
Kathy Williams, Qualifications Service Supervisor
Sarah van Doornewaard, Administrative Asst.
Shane Phelps, Certification Engineer and Investigator
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NC Accessibility Requirement Changes

The North Carolina Accessibility Code is no longer in effect as of January 1, 2010. The NC Building Code Council voted to replace it with the provisions of the International Building Code for accessibility. The new accessibility requirements for NC are found in Chapter 11 of the 2009 NC Building Code and the 2003 edition of ANSI A117.1 – *Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities*. ANSI A117.1 is a smaller book than the previous NC Code, but with some additional requirements not found in the earlier code. Please note that the scoping requirements are located throughout the Building Code in Chapters 10, 11, 34, and Appendix E. Also, you may find the ANSI Commentary beneficial as it has more illustrations along with the commentary.

The former NC Accessibility Code included the technical requirements of the federal American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA requirements are not found in the 2009 Building Code or in ANSI A117.1. While the the ADA requirements are not enforceable by the local inspection department, the ADA requirements are still enforced by the US Department of Justice and must be included by architects and engineers on construction documents.

Access Update Newsletter Available

If you are looking for information on the new code requirements for accessibility to physically disabled persons in North Carolina, then we have a resource for you.

The first Access Update Newsletter has been posted on the DOI Website. You can receive the newsletters automatically by going to the following URL and signing up for them to be sent directly to your inbox.

http://www.ncdoi.com/OSFM/Engineering/CodeServices/engineering_codeservices_interpretations_accessibility.asp

Cont: Access Update Newsletter Available

Since the first newsletter has already gone out, you can select NEWSLETTERS on that page and review a sample of what you will be receiving in the future. By subscribing to this newsletter, you will also receive TECH DATA newsletters on specific accessibility topics from time to time.

On that same web page, you will find Power Point presentations about ANSI A117.1/NCBC Chapter 10 requirements for Type A and Type B Dwellings. These are in pdf format and available to download. Look for this area to grow in the future as more presentations are developed.

If you have questions, contact Laurel Wright at laurel.wright@ncdoi.gov

Inspector Workshops Available

The North Carolina Building Inspectors Association, Mechanical Inspectors Association, Plumbing Inspectors Association and the North Carolina Chapter of the International Association of Electrical Inspectors are providing workshops for inspectors across the state. These workshops are open to interested parties other than inspectors. Contractors and designers who have attended past workshops have found them informative. The workshops are held at various locations across the state and are scheduled several times throughout 2010. If you are interested in attending an inspector's workshop, you can find the schedules in the January 2010 COCO Newsletter on the DOI website at

[http://www.ncdoi.com/OSFM/Engineering/Documents/COCO_Newsletters/COCO_NEWLETTER\(Jan-2010\).pdf](http://www.ncdoi.com/OSFM/Engineering/Documents/COCO_Newsletters/COCO_NEWLETTER(Jan-2010).pdf)

There are classes in Southern Pines and in Hickory on the new ANSI code that may be of interest to you.