



# AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PLUMBING ENGINEERS

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

## BOSTON CHAPTER

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## The New Building Code

Maurice Pillette, PE, spoke at our chapter dinner meeting of October 12, 2010 discussing the Sprinkler requirements for commercial buildings of 7500 SF as contained in the new Chapter 148 S 26 G. Maurice is the chair of the Mass. Sprinkler Appeals Board and as always shared valuable information with us. I have previously talked about this new law and you can find that discussion as well as the Sprinkler Boards advisory of 10/14/09 on our Chapter Website. For those who were unable to attend I wanted to share a few other points that Maurice discussed.

The new Building Code (for commercial work. One and two family has a separate code) will be in full effect on February 6, 2011. The new code, eighth edition is comprised of the IBC 2009, published by the International Code Council and the Massachusetts amendments to this code. The official version of the amendments can be purchased from the State Bookstore. An unofficial version is available on-line. You will also need the IEBC 2009 code for Existing Buildings which code replaces chapter 34 as we knew it in the seventh and previous editions of the Mass code.

NFPA13-2007 will remain as the Sprinkler Standard for Massachusetts in the eighth edition. NFPA13-2010 has NOT been adopted.

Chapter 9 dealing with Fire Protection is unique to Massachusetts. In determining the minimum area requiring sprinklers Massachusetts continues to disregard the presence of Fire Separation in that calculation. In theory, in other states using the IBC2009 you could construct say a 23900 SF building with a fire separation down the middle and not need to sprinkle. In this theoretical building you would have 2 fire zones less than 12000 SF each. In Mass, we don't care about that Fire Separation we only look at total area and if it exceeds 12000 SF that building will be sprinklered.

The new chapter 9 differentiates between the design drawings and the shop drawings for installations. Maurice pointed out that any error made by the designer stamping the drawings is not passed on to the person stamping the shop drawings. You stamp it, you own it.

Unique to Massachusetts is the hierarchy of the Codes to resolve conflicts in them. You don't necessarily design to the strictest of the conflicting rules as you must in some other states. In Mass the hierarchy from Ace to deuce is as follows; Fire and/or building laws (Mass General Laws); Codes and Regulations (780CMR; 527CMR, etc); reference standards; local ordinances or bylaws; Planning Board (special) permits; code (official) interpretations; appeals.

I have attended several talks and seminars by Maurice. The most important thing that I take from each of his talks is that the designer must do due diligence, he/she must sit down, review and discuss the project with the Building and Fire Officials to resolve any issues. Be secure in your knowledge of the code as at the end of the day regardless of the approval or concurrence of the AHJ 's; *All permits are granted on the belief that the plans are Code Compliant.* In other words; no matter what, if it's wrong, you stamped it, you own it.

Manuel B. Garcia, PE. 10/16/10