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Bureau of Construction Codes
Technical Bulletin

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Water Supply to HVAC Equipment

"Providing for Michigan's Safety in the Built Environment"

Technical bulletins are issued to provide clarification on issues that arise regarding code administration and enforcement. The information provided in the bulletin is developed to promote uniform interpretation and enforcement of the state codes.

WATER SUPPLY TO HVAC EQUIPMENT

Issue

Does Section 15(5) of the Plumbing Law allow a mechanical contractor to install water supply connections to HVAC equipment, i.e., humidifiers?

Discussion

Section 15 (5) of the Plumbing Law provides:

> "This act does not prevent a person from performing any activities within the scope of licensure or registration under any other licensure or registration act or applicable codes for that licensed or registered professional adopted pursuant to law."

Mechanical contractors have traditionally installed water vapor humidifiers in forced warm air heating systems, as well as other HVAC equipment requiring a water supply connection. Specifically, the Michigan Mechanical Code defines air conditioning as, "the treatment of air so as to control simultaneously the temperature, **humidity**, cleanness and distribution of the air to meet the requirements of a conditioned space."

Humidifiers require the installation of a water supply, typically through a copper tube connected to the potable water adjacent to or near the furnace. This water tube allows water to the humidifier to provide humidity within the heated air in the furnace for distribution throughout the conditioned space.

A valve assembly or an approved saddle-type water connection is used to connect the water tube to the water line. The location of the valve is typically near the humidifier or other HVAC device requiring a water supply.

In new construction installations, a water valve connection is provided within the plumbing system for such a connection near the furnace location. In existing buildings, a new valve must be installed to accommodate the water supply to the HVAC equipment requiring a water connection.

When a building or structure is retrofitted with a humidifier, a mechanical contractor will generally supply and install this device. Along with this installation, a water supply connection is required in an existing water supply line. When no other work is being performed, the mechanical contractor will provide and install the valve along with the humidification system.

The installation of a water valve connection requires the cutting of a water line, the insertion of a valve assembly, and soldering of the connection into the water line. Alternatively, an approved saddle-type water valve may be installed. These installations

occur near or adjacent to the location of the humidification system to connect water tubing to supply water to the HVAC equipment requiring a water connection.

When such systems require a condensate line, the mechanical contractor may install this line, as it is not considered plumbing.

Conclusion

A mechanical contractor may install a water valve in an existing structure for the connection of a water supply tube to HVAC equipment requiring a water connection. The limitations are based on the location of the water valve in relationship to the mechanical equipment. The installation should occur at or near the mechanical equipment and is limited to supplying water to the HVAC equipment.

A condensate line may be installed by a mechanical contractor when emptying into an open drain and provided with an air gap to the drain.

Questions regarding this technical bulletin may be directed to the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth, Bureau of Construction Codes, P.O. Box 30254, Lansing, MI 48909 or by calling the Mechanical Division at (517) 241-9325 or the Plumbing Division at (517) 241-9330.