



MNSPECT

HELPING YOU COMPLY WITH THE CODE

235 First Street West • Waconia, MN 55387-1302

YOUR CODE PROFESSIONALS:

- Scott Qualle, Designated Building Official
- Ty Turnquist, Operations Director, Senior Commercial Plans Examiner
- Tom Richardson, Relationship Manager
- Nick Qualle, Senior Residential Plans Examiner, Field Inspector
- Dale Engelmann, Senior Plumbing Plans Examiner, Plumbing Inspector
- Derek Qualle, Rental/Field Inspector
- Thomas Krause, Field Inspector
- Dean Mau, Senior Fire Plans Examiner
- Tracy Montgomery, Office Manager
- Wendy Morrissey, Administrative Assistant
- Brandy Blauert, Operations Assistant

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Stewart – 7 years

Stay connected with the MNSPECT MINUTE

September 2015

THE BUILDING CODE: LIKE IT OR DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

My house has been “under construction” for about a year, and the other day my son brought up the subject of finishing the project. I told him that the hold-up with closing the building permit was that we needed to install a handrail on the stairway. He then said words that I will never forget: “We HAVE to install a handrail? They are going to MAKE us put in a handrail?” Yes, MY son was questioning the building code! I explained to him that at some time or another someone fell down the stairs and, because there was not a handrail for them to grab on to, they died or broke their neck. After many similar instances, the wise people that develop the building codes decided enough was enough. They did research on what height the handrails should be for people to easily grab, how far away from the wall it should be for someone to easily grasp it, and what should be done if a sleeve catches the top of the handrail – thus the creation of what is now the MN State Residential Building Code 311.8.3.

We have learned a lot from past disasters such as fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, and sanitation-related plagues. Repeated accidents and structural failures have also added insight into what we can prevent.

Some people disagree with one or more items in the building code (dare I say my son?), and believe me, they let us know. Did you know that you could have a say in what is and what is not in the code? Minnesota Statutes, Section 326B.13, Subdivision 5: “Any interested person may propose amendments to the code which may be either applicable to all municipalities or, where it is alleged and established that geological conditions exist within a municipality which are not generally found within other municipalities, amendments may be restricted in application to that municipality.” The proposed amendment must be submitted in writing on a form provided by the commissioner. You can access the form by visiting: www.dli.mn.gov/RulemakingCCL.asp.

In addition, the Construction Codes and Licensing Division (CCLD) includes in their advisory committee representatives from all areas affected by the building code: construction regulators, contractors, building owners and managers, architects, engineers, building material suppliers, building officials, affected associations, and others interested in the code adoption process. This ensures that the resulting codes and rules are in the best interest of the citizens of the State of Minnesota. The CCLD strives to create a fair and transparent system for code adoption/revision. State law does not require this type of process, but CCLD chooses to incorporate all parties involved into the rule-making process. In order to achieve representation from all areas of interest, letters are sent out to organizations such as permit technicians, builder associations, architect and engineering organizations, and the Association of Minnesota Building Officials (AMBO) requesting a representative and alternatives in case the representative cannot make it to a meeting. In addition, visitors are always welcome to attend the committee meetings, and are asked if they have anything they would like to offer or add to the discussions. If you would like to be on this committee, notify the association you are linked with (i.e., building contractors should contact their Builders Association). The next code to be evaluated will be in 2018.

As for my handrail, I told my son it might not be just the building code demanding a handrail: some days I need it to pull myself back up the stairs!

An alternative to the current Building Codes?

Code of Hammurabi, 1772BC: “If a builder build a house for someone and does not construct it properly, and the house which he built fall in and kill its owner, then that **builder shall be put to death. If it kill the son of the owner the son of that builder shall be put to death.** If it kill a slave of the owner, then he shall pay slave for slave to owner of the house. If it ruin goods, he shall make compensation for all that has been ruined, and inasmuch as he did not construct properly this house which he built and it fell, he shall re-erect the house from his own means.”

If you have a story idea for our newsletter or would like to know if your project requires a permit, please call us at 952-442-7520 or e-mail us at info@mnspect.com.