



City of Austin
Planning & Development Review Department

To: Building Contractors
From: Dan L. McNabb, Deputy Building Official, Division Manager Building Inspections
Date: April 22, 2014
File: Code Interpretation

DM
4-22-14

INTERPRETATION NUMBER: 2014-0005

TITLE: Automatic Shut Off for Air Moving Equipment in Existing Buildings

CODE EDITION: 2012 Uniform Mechanical Code, 2012 International mechanical Code, and 2012 International Existing Building Code

SECTIONS: 2012 Uniform Mechanical Code Sections 102.0, 608.0; Ordinance #20130606-090 Section 608.0; 2012 International Existing Building Code Sections 505 and 506

102.2 Existing Installations. Mechanical systems lawfully in existence at the time of the adoption of this code shall be permitted to have their use, maintenance, or repair continued where the use, maintenance, or repair is in accordance with the original design and location and no hazard to life, health, or property has been created by such mechanical systems.

PURPOSE: One of the core principles of the Mechanical code is to protect the life, health and safety of the occupants of a building. The intent of this code is to prevent the spread of smoke from one part of a building to another. The prevention of the spread of smoke helps the occupants of a building exit during an emergency and also aids the Fire Department in locating the source of smoke.

QUESTION: Would automatic shut off devices have to be installed on existing air moving systems when there is any type of alteration, change, or modification to a system?

ANSWER: Yes. When an alteration has occurred to an existing mechanical system, automatic shut off devices shall be installed according to section 608.0 of the 2012 UMC and Ordinance # 20130606-090. This shall apply to the system as a whole and/or all air moving devices that share either a common supply and/or a common return within the area of construction covered under the permitted scope of work.

The building as a whole shall not be made to comply unless the area of construction meets the requirements under section 505 or 506 of the 2012 International Existing Building Code.

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ANSWER:

Section 505 of the IEBC is a level 3 alteration where the work area exceeds 50% of the aggregate area of the building. When the scope of work is more than 50%, the entire building shall comply with Section 608.0 of the 2012 Mechanical Code.

Section 506 of the IEBC is a change of occupancy. The IEBC defines a change of occupancy as “a change in the purpose or level of activity within a building that involves a change in the application of the requirements of this code.” When the change of occupancy creates an increase in hazard the entire building shall comply with Section 608.0 of the 2012 Mechanical Code.



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