



# THE CODE ADVISOR

Approved Code  
Services, Inc.  
717-215-5849

February 2009  
Volume III  
Issue 2

*Professional Assistance in the Building Codes for  
Architects, Engineers & Code Officials*

## Question of the Month

From the “**Quick Code Answers**”  
Telephone Support records.

**Quick Code Answers** is an annual subscription service that provides **Phone & On-site technical support for your Building Code questions.**

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**Q:** How can we add to an existing, pre-engineered steel building that is already larger than the Allowable Area for its use group? We want to use the same type of construction in the new portion. Sprinklers are not a cost effective option because of the remote location and lack of public utilities. Specifications: One story, slab on grade, 22 ft eave height, Type IIB construction, non-sprinklered, F-2 occupancy classification, 30 ft + fire separation distance.

**A:** 1. Add a fire separated addition with rated opening protectives (IBC 3410.2.3). The code treats the addition as a separate building. This isolates the existing building and only the addition must meet the modern height and area requirements. However, the existing building may still be impacted in other ways, such as, egress routes, occupancy loading, etc. This solution works well in business or educational use buildings. But the restricted number and size of openings may be a problem for storage or factory type structures where product is routinely moved from one location to another. Even then, fire shutters can be installed on larger openings to meet the separation requirements.



2. Change the Construction Type of the existing building to increase the allowable area. It is not always practical, but in this case moving the existing building from IIB to IB construction would increase the Allowable Area to Unlimited with a relatively small investment. By increasing the fire rating on certain

## Client Highlight

### SGS Architects Engineers, Inc.

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structural elements it is possible to move a building to a higher construction type (IBC Table 601) which also increases its Allowable Area (IBC Table 503). At first glance, Table 601 requires two hour ratings on most elements. But after closer analysis only the Structural Frame and Roof are pertinent to this structure. Finally, Note b reduces the Frame to one hour and Note c reduces the Roof to zero. Because the steel frame is exposed, it is fairly economical to treat the fire-side of these supports and achieve a one hour rating. As long as the additional structure is also IB construction, there will be no limits on its area and no need to separate it from the existing structure.

## Code Tip



New or significantly modified assembly areas that employ an audio amplification system must also have an Assistive Listening System (see IBC 1108.2.6 & ICC/ANSI 706 for details).

The latest L&I Audit Report shows a 300% spike in the number of citations issued to BCOs for this code requirement, compared to the previous year!

Taken from our new De-Coding the Accessibility Code Seminar.

## Current Events



Last week the state supreme court overturned the 2006 commonwealth court ruling that allowed building owners to select any state certified inspector for their project. This final decision clearly puts the responsibility for plan review and inspection on the municipality. It affirms that the local BCO has the authority to determine if Third-Party Agencies are authorized and which private services are acceptable.

Most building owners were not even aware of the controversy or were not interested in pressing their rights. Municipalities were much more concerned with the outcome because it put them in a position of responsibility to the state for enforcing the UCC without the authority to control the process. Smaller municipalities were also wrestling with the issue in conjunction with the end of commercial grandfathering. After April many current officials will lose their “conferred credentials” and many code departments will be under-certified, especially in the commercial categories. Private agencies will likely be enlisted to span the gaps in their capability or to provide peak coverage. This ruling will legally allow them to choose a single agency or select several authorized services to assist them in their enforcement of the state building code.

## Recommended Resources

A **FREE** webinar, Critical Changes in the 2009 IRC, will highlight the most significant changes between the 2006 and 2009 IRC, and identify potential impacts to builders, designers and building code officials. The Pennsylvania Housing Research Center is presenting this **FREE** Webinar on April 14<sup>th</sup>. It is intended for Building Code Officials, Residential builders & remodelers, Architects and Material suppliers. The Presenters are Mark Fortney & Bob Buddenbohn.

Many of PHRC's past presentations are also available for viewing (including Handouts) on their website. This is a great resource and did I mention it's **FREE**!?

Check it out at:

[www.engr.psu.edu/phrc/Training/Webinars.htm](http://www.engr.psu.edu/phrc/Training/Webinars.htm)



## Approved Code Product Highlight

### State Certified Third-Party Agency

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## Got Code Questions?



### Do you have a code question that is baffling you?

Submit your code question to [code\\_question@ApprovedCode.com](mailto:code_question@ApprovedCode.com)  
Be sure to include a daytime telephone number in case we need more information.  
We will respond to your question by e-mail or phone as soon as possible.

**APPROVED Code Services, Inc.** provides building code support services, training and products to assist design professionals and code officials in the proper application of the building code. Our staff is experienced and fully certified in all areas of the Pennsylvania State Building Code. Information provided in this newsletter is believed to be accurate and appropriate for the situation being presented. All information must be cross checked with a code book for suitability to the application. The local building code official and the appeals board have the final authority for interpreting the code in each jurisdiction.



Post Office Box 614 Dillsburg, Pennsylvania 17019  
[www.ApprovedCode.com](http://www.ApprovedCode.com)