



# Shenandoah County

Office of Community Development

## Building Department Newsletter

Winter 2016

BUILDING AN INFORMED COALITION OF SHENANDOAH COUNTY CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS

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## Winter Heating and Safety



During the winter we all want to remain warm and spend as little amount of money accomplishing this goal. Most rural houses have fireplaces or wood stoves installed as a heating device. Others rely on supplemental heating devices such as portable electric heaters and others on kerosene heaters. Our last edition discussed the code requirements for smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. This issue will discuss the existence of carbon monoxide and protection

from it. Carbon monoxide is formed as a by-product of burning organic compounds. Most fatalities result from fires, but stoves, portable heaters, and exhaust fumes cause approximately one third of deaths inside the structure. This is often associated with malfunctioning systems and improper installation. Improperly vented gas water heaters, kerosene space heaters, charcoal and gas grills, Sterno type stoves, wood stoves and portable generators all emit CO. Make sure to properly vent all devices and never run any type of engine inside of a structure. Make sure that you have the proper amount of fresh air available for proper combustion.

### Building Department Mission

The mission of the Building Department is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public by assuring that all buildings, structures and related equipment are constructed, installed and maintained in compliance with the standards contained within the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code.

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## Snow Loads

Each jurisdiction is required to insert into their adopted code certain information regarding required design criteria that buildings must be constructed to. One of those items is the snow load of the jurisdiction. Maps are inserted within the code books that indicate what that load is. Whenever there is questionable data for an area that area is designated as case study, meaning local data must be used. Due to the mountainous terrain of Shenandoah County our area is designated as a case study area. Data has been collected from past years that indicate the amount of snow our area has received. This information is then transcribed into what load conditions must be designed to meet. As most agriculture buildings, with some exceptions, are exempt from building code regulations are the structures most likely to collapse during a major snow event. What is not taken into consideration is a heavy snow which is caused by extreme moisture amounts within the snow either by the snow melting or a rain event after a snow event. Look for signs of fatigue in structures such as deflecting ceiling tiles or cracks in ceiling drywall. These are two early signs that the roof structure has exceeded it's design load. Carefully remove as much snow off of the roof when this occurs.

## Woodstove Installation Requirements

One of the questions we receive in regards to woodstove installation is what is required by code and how far does it need to be installed from the wall. The answer, according to the manufacture installation instructions. The code states *Appliances regulated by this code shall be listed and labeled for the application in which they are installed and used, unless otherwise approved in accordance with Section R104.11.* What this means is the appliance has to be designed and tested to a predetermined test standard that verifies that the end product will produce acceptable results under certain conditions. You may also have to install floor protection depending on what type of floor covering you have installed. Make sure you contact your insurance company and advise them of your plans before your begin as some insurance companies will cancel or deny coverage if a woodstove has been installed.

## Free Code Access

Have you ever wondered what exactly is written in the code books? Now you can view free of charge all of the building codes enforced by the Commonwealth of Virginia by going to the following website:

<http://codes.iccsafe.org/#virginia> or find the link on the Shenandoah County Building Inspections website.



### SCCC Membership

Membership in the Shenandoah County Construction Coalition is free. By becoming a member you will be networking with other members of your community that work in the same field as you. Membership allows us a contact list to send information to regarding upcoming events. If you would like to be added to the membership send your information to [mryman@shenandoahcountyva.us](mailto:mryman@shenandoahcountyva.us) or call us at 540-459-6185.

### Did you know...

That 80% of code enforcement personnel will retire within the next 10 years?

Virginia has over 4000 certified code enforcement personnel regulated by DHCD?