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DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TO: Virginia Code Officials

FROM: Emory Rodgers, Deputy Director Division of Building and Fire Regulations
Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) *EMR*

DATE: May 28, 2015

RE: Whole House Mechanical Ventilation

In preparation for mandatory compliance with the 2012 VA Residential Code (July 14, 2015), the issue of mandatory whole house ventilation has been raised as a concern by the Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development (BHCD). The Board has directed this be discussed again during the 2015 update cycle. The most immediate concern however, is that code officials are aware that there are multiple methods by which compliance with whole house ventilation can be achieved and that code officials understand that the choice of methods is by the applicant and not the jurisdiction.

The sections in question are Section R303.4 which mandates whole house ventilation when air infiltration is less than 5 air changes per hour when tested with a blower door and Section R1102.4.1.3 which limits air leakage rate to 5 changes or less and requires verification of that through Section R1102.4.1.2.

Section R1102.4.1.2 was amended during the 2012 code update process to allow visual inspections to remain as a method of verification of air leakage. There was a reminder added to the visual inspection section that whole house ventilation was still required irrespective of the method chosen to verify 5 air changes or less.

The Board has directed staff to provide guidance to the code officials in an effort to avoid unnecessary job site related problems related to this issue. Again, more specifically, there are multiple methods by which to comply and the choice of how to do so is that of the applicant.

The Commentary is helpful in providing some different scenarios of compliance, but in general, compliance can be achieved by using: (1) an exhaust only method; (2) a supply method; or (3) a balanced system method. Again, the choice of how to comply is that of the applicant.

We hope this has helped to eliminate any confusion around the issue of whole house ventilation requirements. Please do not hesitate to call our office if you need any additional information or have questions.

CC: BHCD
Bill Shelton
DHCD Staff

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