

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Division of Building and Fire Regulation  
State Building Codes Office  
Main Street Centre, 600 East Main Street, Suite 300  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

**STATE BUILDING CODE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD**

**INTERPRETATION BOOKLET**

Containing Interpretations Applicable to the 2015 Editions

of the

Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code

and the

Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code

January 2020

## **PREFACE**

The Virginia State Building Code Technical Review Board (Review Board) is a governor-appointed board within the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. The board is responsible for hearing appeals arising under the application of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC), the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) and other building and fire-related regulations of the Department. As a secondary function, the Board interprets the provisions of the USBC and the SFPC and makes recommendations to the Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development for future modification, amendment or repeal of such provisions.

The interpretation booklet contains those interpretations of the Review Board which are still applicable to the code in effect at a given time, rather than a compilation of all interpretations ever issued by the Review Board. The older interpretation booklets and compilations may be reviewed in connection with existing buildings or situations and are therefore still available from the Department, on its website and on the websites of organizations involved in building and fire-code related activities. However, the interpretations in this booklet are those applicable to the 2015 edition of the USBC and the SFPC. Interpretations which were issued under a previous edition of the code, but which are still applicable to the current code, have been editorially changed to correct section references and terminology.

As additional interpretations are issued by the Review Board, they will be posted on the Department's website. Interpretation requests may be submitted by any code enforcement personnel. If an appeal situation exists or potentially exists, then the Review Board may not consider the interpretation request. If requests are submitted by personnel other than a building or fire official, then the appropriate official will be contacted to assure the request is desired.

Interpretation requests may be submitted by any code personnel with approval from the corresponding Building, Maintenance, or Fire Official on a form available on the Department's website. Inquiries or assistance may be obtained by contacting the Review Board staff within the State Building Codes Office, Department of Housing and Community Development, 600 East Main Street, Suite 300, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or by calling (804) 371-7150.

**INTERPRETATIONS  
of the  
2015 USBC Part I – Virginia Construction Code (VCC)**

VCC Section 104.1  
Code Interpretation No. 2/06  
First Issued: 06/20/08, 2006 Edition

**QUESTION:** In jurisdictions which have not elected to enforce the Virginia Maintenance Code, does the third paragraph of Section 104.1 give authority to investigate complaints of immediate and imminent threats to the health and safety from any complainant rather than just complaints by a tenant of a residential rental unit that is the subject of such complaint?

**ANSWER:** No, this provision would only apply to enforcement actions under the previous paragraph unless the locality has elected to enforce the Virginia Maintenance Code.

VCC Section 202 (Definition of “night club”)  
Code Interpretation No. 1/09  
First Issued: 06/17/11, 2009 Edition

**QUESTION:** How do you apply the “main use” terminology in the definition of night club?

**ANSWER:** Determining the main use of a structure is a factual question to be made at the discretion of the local official.

VCC Section 2801.1 (International Mechanical Code Section 602.1)  
Code Interpretation No. 20/90  
First Issued: 07/17/92, 1990 Edition

**QUESTION:** Does Section 602.1 prohibit completely sealed (combustion chamber and combustion air) fuel-fired mechanical appliances from being located in a return-air plenum?

**ANSWER:** Yes. Section 602.1 prohibits the installation of fuel-fired equipment in plenums. However, technical data, research reports or other information may be submitted to the code official to substantiate the approval of a modification request for the use of a specific unit listed for that purpose.

**INTERPRETATIONS  
of the  
2015 USBC Part III – Virginia Maintenance Code (VMC)**

VMC Section 104.1  
Code Interpretation No. 3/09  
First Issued: 03/16/12, 2009 Edition

**QUESTION:** Do all the provisions for unsafe structures in the Virginia Maintenance Code, wherever located, apply in enforcing the second paragraph of Section 104.1?

**ANSWER:** Yes.

**INTERPRETATIONS  
of the  
2015 Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code**

Section 202 (Use of the term “building” in the definition of “commercial cooking appliance”)

Code Interpretation No. 4/06

First Issued: 11/20/09, 2006 Edition

**QUESTION:** Is a trailer or panel-truck considered to be a building under the SFPC, irrespective of whether it's immobilized or anchored?

**ANSWER:** No.

Section 308.1.4  
Code Interpretation No. 4/09  
First Issued: 11/16/12, 2009 Edition

**QUESTION:** Does Section 308.1.4, Exception 1 include townhouses?

**ANSWER:** Yes.