OBC Plan Approval & Inspection Provisions

The following information will assist in determining if a project requires full plan approval including sealed plans, an application requiring inspections without sealed plans, or is exempt from the provisions of the building code. The scope of work of the project will determine when a “license” (certificate of plan approval) is required by being categorized under one of the following definitions and/or provisions below:

**REPAIR.** The reconstruction or renewal of any part of an existing building for the purpose of its maintenance or to correct damage.

**REPAIR, MINOR.** The reconstruction or renewal of any part of an existing building for the purpose of its maintenance when the work has limited impact on access, safety or health. **Minor repairs do not include the cutting away of any wall, partition or portions of walls, the removal or cutting of any structural beam or load bearing support, or the removal or change of any required element of accessibility, means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the egress requirements. Minor repairs do not include addition to, alteration of, replacement or relocation of any standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas, soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical or other work affecting public health or general safety.**

Understanding the difference between maintenance, “minor repairs” and building alterations clarifies what type of approvals or inspections are required. If it is determined that a repair or minor alteration does not require **technical design analysis**, an “application for inspection not requiring sealed plans” would be applicable. Below are additional provisions from OBC Chapter 1 “Scope” regarding the applicability of the code, as well as other work that may be exempt from the OBC provisions:

**101.2 Scope.**

- The provisions of the “Ohio Building Code”, the “Ohio Mechanical Code”, and the “Ohio Plumbing Code” shall apply to the construction, alteration, movement, enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, maintenance, removal and demolition of every building or structure or any appurtenances connected or attached to such buildings or structures. As provided in division (B) of section 3791.04 of the Revised Code, no plans or specifications shall be approved or inspection approval given unless the building represented by those plans or specifications would, if constructed, repaired, erected, or equipped according to those plans or specifications, comply with Chapters 3781. and 3791. of the Revised Code and any rules adopted by the board. An owner may exceed the requirements of the “Ohio Building Code” in compliance with section 102.9. This code applies to detached one-, two-, and three-family dwellings and structures accessory to those dwellings only to the extent indicated in section 310 of this code.
101.3 Intent.

- The purpose of this code is to establish uniform minimum requirements for the erection, construction, repair, alteration, and maintenance of buildings, including construction of industrialized units. Such requirements shall relate to the conservation of energy, safety, and sanitation of buildings for their intended use and occupancy with consideration for the following:

102.10 Work exempt from approval.

- Approval shall not be required for the following work; however, this work shall comply with all applicable provisions of the rules of the board:

Building:

- One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed one hundred twenty square feet (11.15 m²) and playground structures.
- Fences not over six feet (1829 mm) high.
- Retaining walls which are not over four feet (1219 mm) in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II or III-A liquids.
- Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed five thousand gallons (18 927 L) and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed two to one.
- Sidewalks and driveways not more than thirty inches (762 mm) above grade and not over any basement or story below and which are not part of an accessible route.
- Finishes not regulated by this code, decorating, or other work defined as maintenance or minor repair.
- Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery.
- Window awnings supported by an exterior wall of Group R-3.
- Tents and membrane structures exempted in section 3103.1.3.
- Above-ground storage tanks as defined in rule 4101:1-2-01 of the Administrative Code and the associated tank foundations.
- Battery operated smoke or carbon monoxide alarms installed in existing buildings where no construction is taking place.

Electrical:

- Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.
- Electrical equipment used for radio and television transmissions except equipment and wiring for power supply, and the installations of towers and antennas.
- The installation of any temporary system required for the testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus.
- Electrical wiring, devices, appliances, apparatus or equipment operating at less than twenty-five volts and not capable of supplying more than fifty watts of energy, unless specifically addressed in this code.
- Process equipment and the associated wiring on the load side of the power disconnect to the equipment.
6. Electrical wiring equipment not connected to building services equipment in and adjacent to natural or artificially made bodies of water as defined in Article 682 of NFPA 70 as referenced in Chapter 35.

Gas:

- Portable heating appliances;
- Replacement of any part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
- Gas distribution piping owned and maintained by public or municipal utilities and located upstream of the point of delivery.
- Process equipment, including the associated tanks, foundations, and process piping. For combination building services/process or power piping systems, the power or process piping located downstream of the control valve which separates the process from the building services piping is exempt from approval.

Mechanical:

- Portable heating appliances;
- Portable ventilation equipment
- Portable cooling units;
- Replacement of any part which does not alter its approval or make it unsafe
- Portable evaporative cooler
- Process equipment including the associated tanks, foundations, and process piping. For combination building services/process or power piping systems, the power or process piping located downstream of the control valve which separates the process from the building services piping is exempt from approval.
- Heating and cooling distribution piping installed and maintained by public or municipal utilities.

Plumbing:

- The repair of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe; provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drain-pipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, such work shall be considered as new work and an approval shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in this code.
- The clearance of stoppages or the repair of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures, and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provided such repairs do not involve or require the replacement of more than one fixture or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.
- Process equipment including the associated tanks, foundations, and process piping. For combination building services/process or power piping systems, the power or process piping located downstream of the control valve which separates the process from the building services piping is exempt from approval.

The Division of Industrial Compliance is always a great resource to answer questions on plan approval and inspection requirements – 614-644-2223.