



**WINTER / SPRING 2019**

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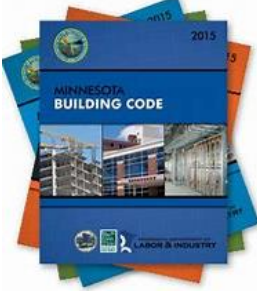


1. **WELCOME:** Welcome to the first issue of a bi-annual newsletter produced by the Community Planning Department. We will try to address issues that may be of interest to general construction community, both code related and operations related. We would also like to invite questions and suggestions, so we may try to address them in the upcoming issues of this newsletter. So again, welcome!

2. **STATISTICS:** Last year was a busy one for the Department. We have approved 482 building, plumbing and sign permits with a total valuation of \$17.2 million, which is 93% higher than in 2018. Twelve single-family homes were built in Marshall along with 43 apartment units. The largest projects included a ALDI store that opened last November, Grace Life Church addition, and a 36-unit Unique Opportunity apartment building.



3. **CODE:** Minnesota State Building Code is a book (actually, a collection of 7 books) that the State of Minnesota created to assure a minimum quality of building construction in the State. The State delegated the responsibility to enforce the Code to the cities. These books may look intimidating on one hand and are expensive to buy on the other hand. Fortunately, there is a way to look up the necessary information for free. Just go to <http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/codes-and-laws/2015-minnesota-state-building-codes> and pick a Code you want to find something in. You may even notice that the Residential code is also available in Spanish, which may come handy in some situations.



4. **LEGAL:** The new law effective since August 1, 2018, requires contractors doing storm repairs to include a written notification about being prohibited from paying insurance deductible to repair damages covered by insurance in their initial estimates. There is no specific language required by the new law, but Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry has more information about this law including a sample notification language to be included.



5. **SPRINKLERS:** The Building Code almost always allows several ways of meeting its requirements, including installing a sprinkler system in a building or subdividing it into several smaller areas with fire rated walls. However, only sprinklers are designed to prevent fire spread beyond its origination point until the fire department arrives and may, in many cases, even extinguish the fire on their own. Considering how devastating and destructive fires can be, for your next project, please consider sprinkling your building, as a relatively inexpensive insurance that may help save your valuable



assets. Sprinkling a building may also decrease insurance rates

<http://www.independentagent.com/Education/VU/SiteAssets/Documents/PDF/SprinkleRedConsumers.pdf>,

[http://www.nfsa.tv/info\\_items/Fire%20Sprinklers%20Save%20Lives%20and%20Money-paper.pdf](http://www.nfsa.tv/info_items/Fire%20Sprinklers%20Save%20Lives%20and%20Money-paper.pdf), <http://www.mbma.com/media/05.08Bulletin%2010.pdf>).

6. **OCCUPANCY CHANGE:** Think of that older building you have, which has been sitting empty for the last several months because a previous tenant moved out. Imagine, all of



a sudden, you get a phone call from someone who thinks that this building of yours is a perfect fit for the new business you have never thought may find this building attractive. This sounds great - and it is - but there is still one thing to consider: Occupancy change. The Building Code requires a building permit for changing an occupancy or use of a building or its portion. This allows a review of possible implications of the change related to different code requirements for different

occupancies. It may not cost you anything if we find that the new occupancy is less (or equally) hazardous than the existing one because we will initially assign a zero valuation to the work. If the new occupancy is more hazardous than existing, certain mitigating measures may be required to assure safe operations of the new business. Additionally, we will check if the new occupancy is a permitted use in the Zoning District it is located in so there are no surprises later on.

7. **VALUATION POLICY:** Building Code requires that the building permit applicant provides an estimated project value which should include labor and materials. It also gives the Building Official the authority to set the final valuation. Many people struggle with estimating their projects' value so to help them and assure equal treatment for all applicants, the Department created a Valuation Policy. The Policy lists values per unit of construction (such as a square foot or window) that may be used to calculate minimum estimated values. This policy is available on the City's website.

8. **CALL FOR INSPECTIONS:** With a busy construction season behind us and a hope for another productive and busy year, we want to remind everyone one more time to call for all required inspections as required by the Building Code. This will save time and money for you, as a contractor, and for the city by eliminating unnecessary visits and phone calls and possible correction orders. All required inspections are listed on the blue inspection card provided to you along with an approved permit.

9. **UPCOMING MEETING:** As has been our tradition for the last several years, we will be having our annual general contractors meeting in January and Mechanical/Plumbing contractors meeting in February. Please watch your mail for our RSVP letter with the specific dates.



10. **CONTACT:** As always, please contact us with all questions and concerns, by phone, e-mail, or in person. You can always visit our City website for valuable information at <https://ci.marshall.mn.us/main/> where you can find us under Community Planning Department title. In our next newsletter we will talk about some of available resources provided there.