

COUNTY OF PLACER Community Development Resource Agency

BUILDING

Administrative Policy Repair vs. Replacement

TO:

Building Service Division Staff

From:

Mike Rodriguez, Building Division Manager

Approved:

Tim Wegner, Chief Building Official

Effective Date:

March 3, 2011

ISSUE:

When alterations and repairs are made to existing buildings as a result of damage sustained in a fire and/or other hazard there may be some confusion as to which edition of the building codes need to be met for those repairs. This policy will help determine the difference between a "repair" and a "replacement" of existing residential building systems and/or components for plan review, permitting and inspection purposes. This policy will also help define the terms "Repair" and "Replacement" for the purposes of plan review, permitting and inspections of these types of projects.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

As construction materials and techniques are constantly changing the provisions of new building codes have also evolved resulting in stricter standards for new construction. In instances where a building was constructed under the provisions of earlier codes most *repairs* to those buildings would be subject to compliance with the codes *in effect when the building was first constructed*. If major portions of the building are *replaced* then the new construction would be required to comply with *the requirements of the code for new construction*.

An example would be: if a damaged portion of an existing deck guardrail is repaired, the guard area being repaired can be returned to its original configuration meeting the code at the time of original construction (i.e. no less than 36" height 6" sphere, where the new code requires 42" height and 4" sphere today). If an entire deck and/or guardrail is replaced, then the new deck and/or guard would have to comply with the code in effect at the time of replacement (i.e. entirely removed guardrail would require the new guard to be installed at 42" not at the previous 36" height).

This determination is critical to the proper calculation of permit fees and application of building code requirements for plan review and inspection purposes.

POLICY:

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarification of the Building Service Division interpretation of the California Building Code regarding alterations and repairs to existing buildings as a result of damage sustained in a fire and/or other hazard. This will ensure that alterations and repairs to existing buildings and their related systems and components are maintained and repaired in compliance with the appropriate building code edition i.e. 2007 CBC or 2010 CBC.

In general, for a work element to be considered a repair or replacement, the item which is being repaired or replaced must already exist. Ordinary repairs do not include the cutting, removing or altering of any structural beam, joist, rafter or bearing support, or the removal or change of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the egress requirements. Ordinary repairs also do not include additions to, alterations of, replacement or relocation of any fire protection system, water supply, sewer, drainage, gas, soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical equipment or other work affecting public health or general safety.

Generally, repairs to an existing building may be completed in conformance with the code in effect at the time the original building permit was issued. Alterations and/or additions to an existing building or structure shall comply with the requirements of the current code in effect for new construction. This process ensures that minimum standards are met and appropriate building materials are used. All buildings and structures are required to be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition.