

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-43-00

July 10, 2000

This is in response to your request for interpretation.

Question 1: What point of discharge is permitted under the current code for fluids (typically ground water) that may accumulate in elevator pits: sanitary sewers, storm sewers, spilling to grade or drywell, or some other discharge?

Answer 1: The intention of a drain or sump pump required in every pit is for the removal of water from fire suppression systems and not from ground water. Pits are to be maintained in a clean, dry condition. The drain or sump pump must discharge into open air outside the pit and hoistway, and not be directly connected to any sewer (indirectly is permissible), regardless of whether a trap of any kind has been provided, reducing the possibility of sewer gasses from entering the hoistway.

Question 2: Due to concern over possible discharge of oils to the environment, is it permissible, by interpretation or through code modification, to continue the practice of manually pumping the pits of hydraulic elevator systems on an as-needed basis?

Answer 2: No. The activation of a sump pump requires an automatic means that is not dependent on human intervention to maintain elevator service during a fire emergency. In order to obtain a modification for new installations, one would have to demonstrate a hardship of why you could not comply with the minimum requirements of the code.

The 1999 State Building Code addresses your concerns of the possibility of discharging oils to the environment. Section 412.5, of the 1997 International Plumbing Code portion of the 1999 State Building Code, requires that when the discharge of floor drains contain oil, grease, sand or other harmful or hazardous substances, interceptors and separators shall be provided.

The elevator industry has products that are used within the hydraulic lines (vegetable oil) that is not considered by the Department of Environmental Protection to be hazardous and, therefore, when used, would not require interceptors and separators to be utilized when the sump pump or floor drain connects to the sanitary sewer system.