

## Friday Night Lights Out

By Joseph P. Guzzo

Have you noticed that High School football is hugely popular lately. “Hugely” I didn’t think I would ever use that word. Anyway it’s big. There was a recent movie, and now a T.V. series no less. When I was a young boy I remember the games were on Saturday morning. Me and my hooligan



buddies would jump the fence. That wasn’t as easy as you think. Back then it seemed like the entire police force surrounded the perimeter of the stadium. So it was a challenge to make it in and out fox, or more often out run the cop. Today the police are there on Friday nights for another reason, major crowd control and even riots. At this point you’re probably checking the front of this paper to see what you’re reading, and wondering what all this has to do with plumbing. A lot, hugely a lot.

248 C.M.R. section 10.10,18, and table #1 govern the use and installation of all toilet facilities. This section is by far the most important part of our regulations. Stadiums are included in this section. The calculations are a little tricky, you must refer to section 10.10,18,2,b “where the capacity is more than 2000 persons”. These calculations are different from table #1. I repeat this only means the calculations are different from table #1 when the capacity is over 2000. Toilet facilities are still required under 2000, you just figure them from table #1. Just about every High School has a stadium. My estimate is the average capacity is between 3500 and 6000. It used to be a good argument that these stadiums were seldom full, except perhaps on Thanksgiving. But given the growing popularity of High School football many if not all of these games are full. In fact in one of the commercials for the new TV series a player mentions “This place is filled with over 16,000 fans to see us.” The TV show is fictional, but the crowds at High School football games across the State and Country are real, and these numbers may not be exaggerated.

Proper and adequate toilet facilities are required by State code for all stadiums. But for some reason many Cities and Towns have skirted this law either on purpose or simply by ignorance. So you must be wondering, if a High School stadium does not have proper or adequate toilet facilities, where do all those people go to the bathroom? You guessed it Porta-Pottys. First and foremost Porta-Pottys may not be substituted for proper and adequate toilet facilities as required by State code under any circumstances. If the facility meets code then there is no problem using additional Porta-Pottys. But the facility must first meet the code requirement based on the full capacity. The problem is that many of these stadiums do not have enough toilet facilities, or as I have found out, none at all.

Porta-Pottys are not completely a bad thing. Although many people will refuse to use them, except as a very last resort. The Porta-Potty industry is worldwide and well organized under The Potable Sanitation Association International. And in fact support proper adequate legitimate toilet facilities. Following are excerpts taken directly from their literature. “*we have been instrumental in assisting countries, states, and communities, when permanent facilities are either not available or inadequate*” “*there is a very real danger of disease transmissions wherever adequate restrooms are not available. The only*

*hope of eliminating the unsanitary conditions that occur in many areas lies in the hands of responsible local government entities.” “The Center for Disease Control has investigated and their conclusion at this time is, due to the shortage of sanitation facilities (portable and fixed) and little to no hand wash facilities, is the larger contributing factor for the hepatitis A increase. The investigation also indicated that contamination is not from pre-infected individual transference but from on site infection due to lack of proper sanitation facilities creating hand-to mouth contamination on a large scale.”*

As I have mentioned many times, the lack of proper and adequate toilet facilities cannot be taken lightly. Problems associated with this are the spread of germs and disease due to no hand washing fixtures or hot water, as mentioned by the Porta-Potty Association even though their porta-pottys do not have hand washing capabilities. Also accessibility for the disabled and elderly, and the inconvenience and health issues related to waiting to use a bathroom which includes an increase risk of urinary track infections. For all people the discomfort and poor hygiene resulting from the lack of proper and adequate toilet facilities is at the very least demeaning. That is why the code requires toilet facilities, it's just common sense.

Surely the public is aware of this shortage of bathrooms at local high school games. In fact, it's being used in an advertisement for the Mass. State Lottery. In one skit in how people choose their numbers a women says “waiting in line to use the bathroom at the game with 1613 people ahead of me,” - 613 being her lucky number. Hope she was lucky enough to make it to the bathroom. So what's happening? Why are these high school stadiums not complying with the code? One reason is the false belief that Porta-Pottys somehow fill the code requirements. Another reason is that some architects either don't know or try to get away with not including them on the plans. I found this out during a recent plan review for a new high school. Basically I caught the architect with his pants down. Sorry. I have also heard the ridiculous excuse they would use the bathrooms in the school. Try doing the calculations for a stadium for let's say 4000 people. First even if you opened the entire school and used every bathroom in the building it would not be enough. I can see it now opening an entire school to the public during a Friday night riot. Here's what really happens. They open one door to one bathroom if that. Most do not open the school at all and rely only on Porta-Pottys.

The real blame for this monumental blunder lies directly with the Plumbing Inspector, and the City or Town. For it is the Plumbing Inspectors duty and responsibility to enforce our code. However the City or Town must cooperate. I have found out first hand this could be a hugely difficult adventure. But I haven't given up and won't. The photo shows the only way 3500 people can go to the bathroom at a High School Stadium.