

How To Properly Calculate Toilet Facilities

Part 5, The Unknown

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This will be the last in our series about toilet facilities. I call it The Unknown because there are so many uses that are not explained in the code, and in many cases you are left to your own common sense decisions when it comes to bathrooms, here are a few.

A Warehouse. This is certainly a mystery. Our code provides no definition of a warehouse. However a warehouse is listed under section 10.10,18,j *Employee Toilet Facilities for Industrial Buildings*, table #1 lists these uses as, *Employee, Industrial, Factory, Warehouse and Similar Usage*. Toilet rooms for these uses are much different than employee non-industrial section i. It will always require separate men's and women's rooms. Urinals are mandatory, unlike other uses where you may substitute a percentage of urinals for water closets, for these uses urinals must be installed. This automatically eliminates unisex toilet rooms no matter what size the space. In addition showers must also be provided for both men and women, and don't forget floor drains.

The problem is the term warehouse may be many different things. A warehouse may be a large space which employs many workers, or it may be simply a place for storage only. Would toilet rooms with urinals and showers really be needed? In either case it is much different than a factory where the major toilet rooms with urinals and showers would be needed. If you come across this problem work with the Building Inspector and the building owner to determine the true intent of the space. Never underestimate the toilet rooms because of future use of the building. This use needs to be defined in our code, perhaps options for rough in only may be considered.

Driving Schools, Karate and Dance Studios, Music Stores that provide lessons, etc. All of these places have teachers and students. There is no doubt toilet rooms must be provided for the students. But the question is are they considered educational under our code section 10.10,18, h. If so it really gets complicated. First you would need separate toilet rooms for the teachers. Then you would need to provide urinals, again mandatory under the educational use. And finally you get into the age of the students, and different amounts and sizes of the fixtures. Not to mention the handicapped code which will also dictate different plumbing fixtures and clearances. The key to this problem is you must put these uses in perspective, and treat each one on an individual basis, for example. If the building itself is dedicated to educational use then it would make sense that the building and spaces within should comply to the educational category. However if you have a space in which the teaching portion is incidental to the primary use of the building then you could calculate the toilet rooms differently. For instance, a music store primarily sells instruments, records, etc., but they also provide lessons. The lessons are usually on a small scale, and is not a major operation. I would make sure toilet rooms are accessible for the students, but would not go so far as a categorize this under educational. But then there are also cases that are difficult to figure, like a karate studio. The classes are for all age groups, and classes are held day and night. This use and others like dance, gymnastics, etc. etc, may need the multiple toilet rooms under the educational category. That's why I call them unknown.

Outdoor Uses, Open Spaces. A few years back The Town Administrator called me and told me they were planning to build toilet facilities for the downtown area. He asked, how many toilets are required? I told him as many as you can fit. Many downtown areas have this problem especially tourists Towns. The truth is our code does not require toilet facilities for the general public. In fact the closest the code comes to this is a public beach. In all other uses toilet facilities are required for the employees, and for what the code calls “places of assembly”, in buildings, then bathrooms are required for the customers and employees. A stadium is also listed in our code, toilet facilities are calculated by what the code calls the population of the stadium.

No where is it written in any regulation that any business, public or private must supply bathrooms for the world. Not a City Hall, not a Police Station, gas station, library, church, or restaurant. Bathrooms are required for employees and customers or patrons only.

There are still many unknown uses., for example could a little league or soccer field with some bleachers be considered a stadium? How about a golf course, some outdoor concert theaters hold just as many people as a stadium, why then are not proper and adequate toilet facilities required? All these people need to use a bathroom, be provided clean water, and wash their hands, don't they? But instead of seeing more toilet facilities for more uses we see less. Like stadiums and public beaches, ignorance has eliminated many of these required bathrooms. Where bathrooms once stood now you see porta-pottys.

There is no doubt the code needs to be revised to provide more toilet facilities for more uses. Uses must be detailed and categorized so there aren't so many unknown. The highway for toilet facilities runs right across the Plumbing Inspectors desk, it is without question the most important part of the code, in order to fulfill the true intent and spirit of our code, “ to protect the health of the nation”