

Point Missed On Stadium Bathrooms

It was with great interest as I read the article concerning stadium toilet facilities, (March 18, 2008). As I am very familiar with this issue. First I must explain a few facts. Massachusetts State Plumbing Code 248 C.M.R. section 10.10,18 and table #1 govern the use and installation of all toilet facilities. Stadiums are included in this section. The facility at Woburn High is a stadium, anyone that would challenge that definition would lose that argument forthwith, it's been attempted. Also portable toilets A.K.A. porta-pottys are not recognized by code, and may not be substituted for proper and adequate toilet facilities as required by code under any circumstances.

The wide ranging use of porta-pottys during the last twenty years has created a false belief that somehow they fill the code requirement. Another reason is that many architects may actually believe this and do not understand the plumbing code. Many also do not seek out advice from Plumbing Inspectors. I found the statements by architect representative Brooke Trivas very interesting, as if she was vigorously backpedaling. And many of the statements were simply not true. For example, twice in the article Trivas implied "*no municipality has ever been before the State Officials to tackle the question of whether separate restroom were required at playing fields attached to educational facilities*". And, "*at the state Plumbing Board Meeting that this was the first time a community had ever been before their Board of Appeals*". Both of these statements are outright false. I have been before the Plumbing Board for a variance request for a lesser amount of toilet facilities for the High School Stadium in my Town. And in fact the Board hears a myriad of variance requests for all types of construction projects including many from Cities and Towns.

In the midst of all this debating one person quoted in the article actually made sense. Building Committee Member Patricia Mistretta statements could not have been more accurate, "*the firm was retained by the city to ensure that the WMHS project was in compliance with State regulations*", and "*just because other communities didn't do it, that doesn't make it right for us not to, this is why we hired professionals*". The City of Woburn has paid a substantial fee to the architects for their professional services, and what's their solution, pass the buck, and try to lay blame on other mistakes.

Unfortunately not one mention in the entire article touched on the real issue, that is, the purpose, the intent, and the importance of proper and adequate toilet facilities. I have said it over and over again and again 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. In fact even the Porta-Potty industry support proper adequate legitimate toilet facilities. The 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 or no hand washing 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". Keep in mind porta-pottys do not have proper hand washing capabilities. Also accessibility for the disabled and elderly, the inconvenience and health issues related to waiting to use a bathroom, which include 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 is simply pure common sense.

The City of Woburn is building a brand new state of art, modern athletic complex. Building this facility without proper and adequate toilet facilities is inconceivable to me. And anyone who believes that toilet facilities are only a convenience and not a necessity should be ashamed, especially an architect.

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