

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMENT FORM FOR PROPOSED CODE CHANGES (This form must be submitted electronically)

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1303 - #17

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### Proposed Code Change - Language

~~**Foundation walls.** Hollow block masonry foundation walls shall be constructed with one of the following to prevent passage of air from the interior core of the wall into the living space either:~~

- ~~1) a continuous course of solid masonry;~~
- ~~2) one course of masonry grouted solid; or~~
- ~~3) a solid concrete beam at or above the finished exterior ground surface, to prevent passage of air from the interior of the wall into the living space.~~

~~When a brick veneer or other masonry ledge is installed, the course immediately below that ledge shall be solid or filled. Joints, cracks, or other openings around all penetrations of both exterior and interior surfaces of masonry block or wood foundation walls below the exterior ground surface shall be filled with polyurethane an approved caulking or equivalent sealant. Penetrations of all foundation wall types shall be sealed.~~

**Foundation walls.** Hollow block masonry foundation walls shall be constructed with either a continuous course of solid masonry, one course of masonry grouted solid, or a solid concrete beam at or above finished grade. Where a brick veneer or other masonry ledge is installed, the course immediately below that ledge shall be grouted or solid. Joints, cracks, or other openings around all penetrations of both exterior and interior surfaces of masonry block or wood foundation walls below the ground surface shall be caulked. Penetrations of concrete walls shall be caulked.

### Proposed Code Change – Need and Reason

Confusing language can lead to misapplication of the code and a lack of uniformity. That is the situation with the current draft language on foundation walls. The intent of the section, based on EPA and other documents, is to provide a “cap” at the top of hollow block masonry foundation walls to prevent radon that might seep into the voids of the block from escaping through holes in the top course of block.

But the way that the draft language is written gives the use of the rule different direction. First, the current rule states that foundations must be constructed in one of three ways and then it lists the three ways. If one uses either option #1 or #2, the rule requires a continuous course of solid masonry or a course of grouted masonry.

It doesn't state where that course must be. Presumably it could be the first course in the foundation. #3 states that a concrete beam may be used and it should be placed "at or above the finished exterior ground surface".

This is a matter of sentence construction. The phrase "at or above the finished exterior ground surface" should apply to all three methods but that is not the way it is written. This will result in varying methods applied in the field and varying levels of acceptance from code enforcement. It is necessary to correct that flaw.

Furthermore, the text is changed regarding the material to be used for sealing penetrations. The text simply states that they must be caulked. The proposed draft language states that the material used must be "approved". This is defined in the code as "acceptable to the building official" and implies a submittal of the material for review and acceptance and approval by the building official. This method is way to formal for determining the appropriate type of caulking to use. Since most of the barrier to radon is a plastic sheet that is overlapped by 12 inches without any method of sealing the lap, it hardly seems critical that any high performance caulking material be used. And, there is nothing given in the text, no standard, on which the building official may base approval.

It is necessary to correct these deficiencies in the draft rule. This proposal accomplishes that.

This proposal is reasonable because it provides an understandable and enforceable section on which to regulate movement of air in foundation walls.

#### **Proposed Code Change – Cost/Benefit Analysis**

This proposal will have no impact on the cost of construction.

## Other Factors to Consider Related to Proposed Code Change

1. Is this proposed code change meant to:

change language contained in a published code book? If so, list section(s).

change language contained in an existing amendment in Minnesota Rule? If so, list Rule part(s).  
Radon rules

delete language contained in a published code book? If so, list section(s).

delete language contained in an existing amendment in Minnesota Rule? If so, list Rule part(s).

neither; this language will be new language, not found in the code book or in Minnesota Rule.

2. Is this proposed code change required by a Minnesota Statute or new legislation? If so, please provide the citation to the Statute or legislation.

No

3. Will this proposed code change impact other sections of a published code book or of an amendment in Minnesota Rule? If so, please list the affected sections or rule parts.

No

4. Will this proposed code change impact other parts of the Minnesota State Building Code? If so, please list the affected parts of the Minnesota State Building Code.

No

5. Who are the parties affected or segments of industry affected by this proposed code change?

Code officials, building designers, contractors, building owners

6. Can you think of other means or methods to achieve the purpose of the proposed code change? If so, please explain what they are and why your proposed change is the preferred method or means to achieve the desired result.

No

7. Are you aware of any federal requirement or regulation related to this proposed code change? If so, please list the regulation or requirement.

No