

**Plumbing Board**  
**c/o Department of Labor and Industry**  
**443 Lafayette Road North**  
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**FINAL INTERPRETATION**

Inquiry: PB0040  
Subject: Sizing of building drains and branches  
Code Reference: Minnesota Plumbing Code, Chapter 4715  
Submitted by: Jeremiah Christenson, Obermiller Nelson Engineering, Inc.  
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Approved by: Code Interpretation Committee  
by Jim Gander, Committee Chair  
Date Received: April 13, 2009  
Issue Date: May 11, 2009

**Questions:** What is the definition of a building drain and where does this line start to occur in the building?

**Answer:** Minnesota Rules, part 4715.0100, subpart 24, defines the building drain as the lowest piping of the drainage system. A building that has several wings is likely to have at least one sanitary branch serving each of the wings. In this circumstance, it is difficult to determine which wing or which sanitary branch is actually the building drain and not just a horizontal building drain branch. Our conclusion is that, when all of the building drain branches have been connected to a single pipe, then the building drain, which conveys all discharge to the building sewer, begins at the lowest branch connection.

**Related Code Provision:** Minnesota Rules, part 4715.2310, subpart 2, sets out minimum sizing guidelines for drainage piping. The single asterisk on the second column points the designer to the note that references horizontal branches of the building drain. This reference means that the column on “horizontal fixture branches” includes horizontal branches of a building drain that do not receive discharge solely from stacks. For example, any horizontal branch of a 4" building drain that does not receive discharge solely from stacks cannot receive more than 160 fixture units.

**Commentary:** The submitter pointed to an illustration on page 113 of the code book and argued that it was part of the Minnesota Plumbing Code. The illustrations in the code book are merely for illustrative purposes and are not part of the Minnesota Plumbing Code because the illustrations were never formally adopted as rules. The complete current Plumbing Code can be found at the following website:  
<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/?id=4715>

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) plumbing unit staff issued an informative guideline regarding the sizing of drainage pipes in approximately 2001. This guideline has been used by field inspectors and plan reviewers consistently without any other complaints or requests for interpretation since issuance. This guideline is published on DLI's website, where it is listed under 4715.0100, subpart 24, at: <http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/PlumbingSuppl.asp>

The committee decided to uphold the DLI staff's long-standing interpretation, as set forth in the DLI guideline.

All parties were heard and had fair opportunity to present facts, thoughts, opinions, and challenges to the alternative opinions at the April 29, 2009, meeting of the Code Interpretation Committee. As required by Minnesota Statutes, section 326B.127, subd. 5, the Plumbing Board will consider this Final Interpretation for adoption as part of the Minnesota Plumbing Code.

Date: May 11, 2009



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Jim Gander, Committee Chair  
Code Interpretation Committee