




CITY OF CHICAGO

# DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

## Code Memorandum

To: Department of Buildings Plan Reviewers, Project Managers, Project Administrators and Inspectors; Department of Public Health; Department of Water Management

From: Judith Frydland, Commissioner 

Date: October 11, 2017

RE: **Pilot Program: Use of Materials Authorized by the Illinois Plumbing Code in Smaller Buildings**

---

Section 18-29-105 of the Municipal Code authorizes the Building Commissioner to permit the use of alternative materials, methods and equipment for plumbing applications either when those materials are equivalent to those called for in Chapter 18-29 or when the strict requirements of Chapter 18-29 cause practical difficulties and the alternative proposal will conform to the intent and purpose of Chapter 18-29. The purpose of Chapter 18-29 is to establish minimum standards to protect safety, health, property, and public welfare. In order to evaluate the performance and relative cost of commonly-available plumbing materials in applications not currently authorized by Chapter 18-29 of the Municipal Code, but allowed by the Illinois Plumbing Code, I am announcing a pilot program to accept and review requests for approval of alternative plumbing materials meeting the following requirements:

### A. Eligible Projects

The following projects are eligible to participate in the pilot program:

1. New construction of buildings of exclusively residential occupancy, not more than four stories in height; or
2. Any work in an existing building (constructed prior to 2010) of any occupancy, and not more than four stories in height, including additions to such buildings.<sup>1</sup>

### B. Water Distribution Pipe and Pipe Fittings

1. Instead of materials allowed by Section 18-29-605 for water distribution pipe and fittings, the applicant will propose Chlorinated Polyvinyl Chloride (CPVC) pipe and appropriate fittings authorized for such use by the Illinois Plumbing Code, 77 Ill. Admin. Code 890;
2. The work will occur as part of an eligible project;
3. The applicant will submit to the Department both (a) a price proposal from a licensed plumbing contractor to install materials permitted by Section 18-29-605, and (b) a price proposal from the same plumbing contractor to install the CPVC pipe and appropriate fittings in substantially the same configuration;

---

<sup>1</sup> Other existing buildings up to 80 feet in height, especially designated Chicago Landmarks, may be deemed eligible for participation in the pilot program after an in-person meeting with the Building Commissioner and demonstration of compelling benefits.

4. The applicant will identify in the request any practical difficulties that will be alleviated by permitting use of the proposed alternative material;
5. The applicant will pay the alternative code approval review fee of \$150.00;
6. The applicant will submit, with the request, a statement from the selected plumbing, architect, contractor or engineer of record evaluating the relative quality, strength, effectiveness, durability, and safety of the materials to be used in each proposal. (Plumbing contractors applicants may complete the yes/no question on the application form. All others must submit a separate signed letter.)

### **C. Drainage and Vent Pipe and Pipe Fittings**

1. Instead of materials allowed by Section 18-29-702 for drainage and vent pipe and pipe fittings, the applicant will propose specific alternative material(s) authorized for such use by the Illinois Plumbing Code, 77 Ill. Admin. Code 890;
2. The work will occur as part of an eligible project;
3. The applicant will submit to the Department both (a) a price proposal from a licensed plumbing contractor to install materials permitted by Section 18-29-702, and (b) a price proposal from the same plumbing contractor to install the proposed alternative material in substantially the same configuration;
4. The applicant will identify in the request any practical difficulties that will be alleviated by permitting use of the proposed alternative material;
5. The applicant will pay the alternative code approval review fee of \$150.00; and
6. The applicant will submit, with the request, a statement from the selected plumbing contractor, architect, or engineer of record evaluating the relative quality, strength, effectiveness, durability, and safety of the materials to be used in each proposal. (Plumbing contractors applicants may complete the yes/no question on the application form. All others must submit a separate signed letter.)

**NOTE:** Approval for alternative underground drainage and vent pipe and pipe fitting materials under this pilot program is limited to the building drain (house drain) (within 5 feet of the building foundation per 18-29-201). The building sewer (house sewer) is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Water Management and must be built of a material listed in Table 18-29-702.3.

### **D. Combustible Pipe - Protection of Penetrations in Fire Rated Floors and Walls**

When combustible pipe material is authorized under this pilot program, all penetrations through fire-rated floors or walls must be protected in accordance with Section 714 of the 2015 edition of the *International Building Code* in addition to the requirements of Chapter 15-8. In such cases, details of the protection required at such penetrations must be included in the permit drawings.

### **E. Inspections**

All plumbing work performed pursuant to this pilot program must pass an in-person rough inspection by a City plumbing inspector. All alternative materials must be installed in strict conformance with the approved plans, manufacturer's requirements, and Illinois Plumbing Code.

## F. Requests

This pilot program will accept requests from **October 11, 2017**, through March 31, 2018.

Requests for water distribution pipe and drainage and vent pipe must be submitted separately.

Requests must be submitted on official pilot program request forms, which are available on the Department's web site at [www.cityofchicago.org/buildings](http://www.cityofchicago.org/buildings).

Before submitting a request, the applicant must pay a \$150.00 alternative code approval review fee to the Department of Finance using an official payment form. A copy of the receipt must be attached to the request.

Requests may be submitted in person at the front desk on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor at City Hall or by e-mail to [altcodeapproval@cityofchicago.org](mailto:altcodeapproval@cityofchicago.org).

Requests to approve plumbing work which was previously installed without a permit or contrary to a permit will be denied.

Each request will be evaluated by the Department to determine if permitting the alternative material will either alleviate a practical difficulty, provide a result equivalent to the requirements of 18-29, or both.

Applicants should allow 10 business days for review. Decisions will be e-mailed to the applicant.

The applicant must then obtain a permit for the plumbing work, and attach a copy of the approved request form to the permit application or permit application drawings.

If the work has already been permitted (but not yet performed), the applicant must obtain a revision to the existing permit at the easy permit counter on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor at City Hall. Revisions to change plumbing materials as approved through this pilot program are subject to a \$75.00 fee.

Questions about the program may be directed to [dobinfo@cityofchicago.org](mailto:dobinfo@cityofchicago.org).