

TECH TALK

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Working with Standards, Codes, and Inspectors

by Dave Fetters

The products we develop, sell, and use in our HVAC industry are subject to testing to **Standards**, installing to **Codes**, and inspection for approval by **Inspectors**. As an example, our Type B gas vent is Underwriters Laboratories-listed to their Standard 441; it must be installed according to our instructions as required by The National Fuel Gas Code and must be inspected for compliance before being approved for use.

A **Standard** is a widely accepted consensus document, developed over time by those knowledgeable in the industry, and is used as a basis for measuring, evaluating, or judging the quality and performance of products. Usually, products listed

by a recognized agency and tested to an industry-accepted standard have met a certain minimum level of performance, allowing everyone to feel secure in the knowledge that, if installed properly, the product is safe for its intended use. Listed products require a label attesting to its approval.

A **Code** is a systematic document of rules given statutory force by an adopting governmental agency. Codes are written to safeguard life, health, property, and public welfare. They provide a foundation from which consistent understanding and enforcement can take place. Codes will require appropriate products to be listed and installed according to the manufacturers' installation

instructions. Codes usually do not prevent the use of materials, methods, or procedures not specifically prescribed by it, but they may require evidence to substantiate claims of equivalent performance or safety of alternatives.

The **Inspector** is the authority having jurisdiction designated by the governmental agency. The inspector administers and enforces codes by inspecting installations during construction, or at least before use or occupancy.

Installers and inspectors, working together, will minimize conflicts. Misunderstandings will occur and disputes will arise, but letting the issue become confrontational is inadvisable. Usually, it becomes a matter of discussing the issues for resolution. Contractors/installers should know the product, the installation instructions, and which codes apply.

Hart & Cooley is able to help with questions about codes and standards as they apply to the products we sell. We have people on staff who have been members of codes and standards writing bodies for many years. We conduct training to

installers and to inspectors on portions of codes that apply to our products.

Whenever someone calls for help, we need to deal with clear and concise facts. Be prepared to provide comprehensive and detailed information with documentation if necessary. We can only deal with the information provided to us. If the information is inaccurate or incomplete, it could affect the outcome of the disagreement.

Call us, fax us, or contact us by e-mail through our web site at **www.hartandcooley.com**.



Hart & Cooley
install confidence

Hart & Cooley, Inc. 800.433.6341 *toll-free*
500 East Eighth Street 616.392.7855 *phone*
Holland, MI 49423 800.223.8461 *toll-free, fax*
info@hartcool.com 616.392.7971 *fax*
www.hartandcooley.com