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LOWERED WORKSPACES IN SERVICE GARAGES

DISCUSSION

This STANDATA applies to service garages that are performing oil change and/or lubricating work only and have spaces that are below but are open to the main floor level. These lowered workspaces provide easier access to the underside of motor vehicles for changing vehicle lubricating oil.

Particular concerns with these lowered workspaces are the reduced headroom and constricted means of access to exit. Employees working in these spaces are subject to carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and flammable and toxic vapours from motor vehicles entering and exiting the workspace.

VARIANCE

Lowered work spaces may be provided in service garages without separation from the main floor provided the following requirements are satisfied:

1. The floor surfaces in the building are noncombustible,
2. The lowered workspace is intended for the use of employees only,
3. The lowered workspace shall be ventilated in accordance with the requirements of Part 6,
4. The lowered workspace shall have minimum headroom clearance of 2 m,
5. If the area of the lowered work space is not more than 150 m² and the travel distance to the nearest exit is not more than 15 m, the lowered work space shall be provided with
 - a. not less than one access to exit stair constructed in conformance with Section 3.4., and
 - b. not less than one access ladder that is protected by a guard at the top and located so as not to be blocked by any work activity,

Unless stated otherwise, all Code references in this STANDATA are to Division B of the Alberta Building Code 2006.

Alberta
Municipal Affairs
and Housing

Issue of this STANDATA is authorized by
the Chief Building Administrator and
the Chief Fire Administrator

[Original Signed]
Ata R. Khan, MRAIC

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Raymond Ligenza



SAFETY CODES COUNCIL

6. If the area of the lowered work space exceeds 150 m² or the travel distance to the nearest exit is more than 15 m, the lowered work space shall be provided with not less than two access to exit stairs located remotely from each other and constructed in conformance with Section 3.4.,
7. The lowered work space shall contain no fuel-burning appliances,
8. The lowered work space shall have no open flame or spark-producing devices, appliances or operations (e.g., welding, grinding, cutting, blowtorch, etc.),
9. As per Articles 3.2.5.17. and 9.10.20.4., portable extinguishers shall be provided and installed in conformance with the Alberta Fire Code 2006, and
10. All electrical installations in the lowered workspace shall conform to the electrical regulations made pursuant to the Safety Codes Act.

In addition, there are requirements in Division B of the Alberta Fire Code 2006 that relate to the storage of flammable and combustible liquids.

1. Used lubricating oil storage tanks located inside buildings and in a lowered work space are permitted to be outside of a designated storage room provided they are installed in conformance with Sentence 4.3.12.1.(3) and Article 4.3.12.7.
2. Storage tanks shall be built and installed in conformance with the standards for aboveground storage tanks for flammable liquids and combustible liquids in Article 4.3.1.2.
3. Storage tanks meeting ULC standards for double-walled, protected or contained tank assemblies as permitted in Article 4.3.1.2. are considered an acceptable alternative to providing required spill control measures.
4. In conformance with Article 4.2.8.2., the maximum capacity for used oil storage tanks that are located in a lowered work space shall be not more than 5 000 L.

This VARIANCE applies throughout the province of Alberta.