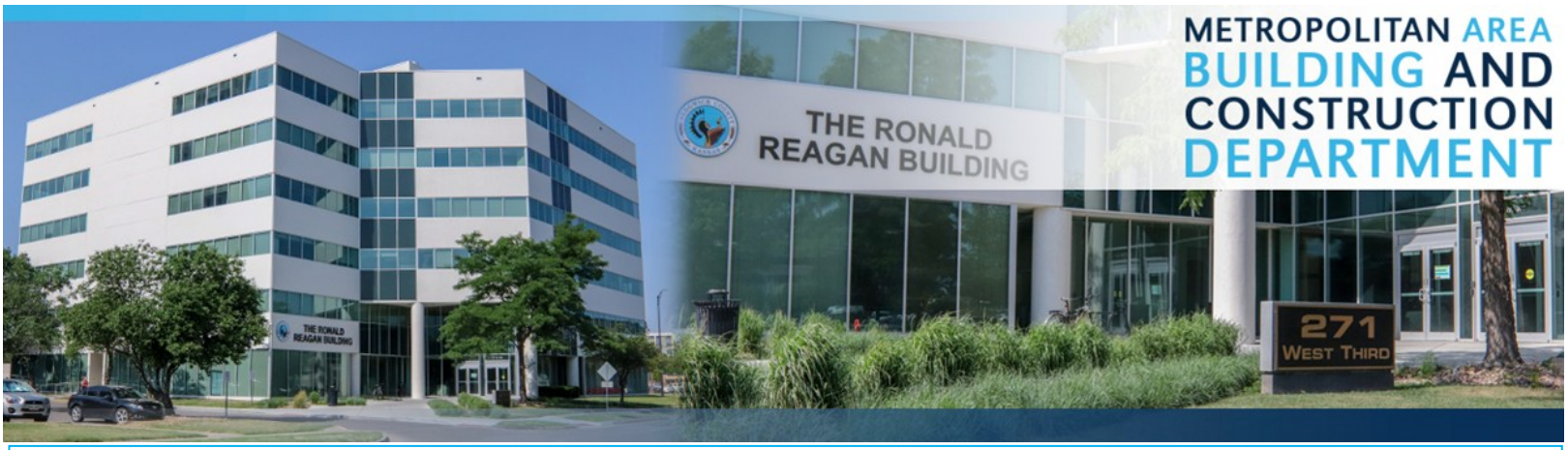

METROPOLITAN AREA BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT

MABCD CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY NEWSLETTER

Issue 58—March 2026 **https://www.sedgwickcounty.org/mabcd/mabcd-newsletter/** *Chris Nordick - Editor*

Get all of your latest MABCD news each month right here with the MABCD newsletter

Administration -

Trade License and Certificate Holders - REMINDER:

Although you may no longer upload your renewal documents to the portal (email, drop off, postal mail is accepted), once staff has processed your renewal application, online payment is still available. You must notify staff of your online payment to receive a copy of your license or certificate.

Trade License Holders – if you have not renewed for this cycle, you are unable to obtain permits or inspections until you have submitted all required documentation for the renewal and have paid the license fee. Licenses cannot be renewed unless the Master Certificate holder has renewed their certificate.

Certificate Holders – All CEU's must be complete and submitted with your renewal application. Only approved CEU's (https://scks.sedgwickcounty.org/mabcd/Lists/Continuing%20Education/All.aspxare) are accepted.

The penalties for late certificate renewals are as follows:

January 1 – March 31	No penalty hours (Grace Period)
April 1 – June 30	1.5 hours
July 1 – August 31	3 hours
September 1 – December 31	4.5 hours
After December 31	See Section Chief

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Special points of interest

- Trade License and Certificate renewals.
- Foundation requirements and PI testing..
- 2024 IMC - Guards and Sloped Roofs.
- Advisory Board calendar.

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Building Division

Understanding Foundation Requirements and PI Testing

One Code, Many Communities

The Metropolitan Area Building and Construction Department (MABCD) provides inspection and plan-check services for a wide geographic area. It is important for contractors and homeowners to understand that the Wichita-Sedgwick County Unified Building Trade Code (UBTC) governs construction in all of the following areas:

· The City of Wichita

· All of Unincorporated Sedgwick County

· Any city in Sedgwick County utilizing MABCD services via a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

When a city signs an MOA with Sedgwick County, they are formally adopting the UBTC. It is critical to remember that the issuance of a building permit is not a waiver of code requirements. Even if a local city office does not explicitly request a soil report at the time a permit is issued, MABCD inspectors are still required to verify these standards in the field. A permit grants permission to build, but it does not authorize construction that violates the safety standards set forth in the UBTC.

Why PI Testing is Mandatory

We have noticed a recurring issue where Plasticity Index (PI) testing is overlooked, particularly on projects in smaller jurisdictions or unincorporated areas. Some builders assume that if the requirement wasn't mentioned during the initial permit application, it isn't necessary for that specific site.

However, per the UBTC and our local foundation standards, a soil test to determine the PI is mandatory before starting any foundation for a habitable structure. This test measures the expansiveness of our local clay—essentially how much the soil will shrink or swell as moisture levels change. Without this data, a foundation cannot be properly designed to prevent structural shifting, cracking, or "cupping" over time.

The 30-Inch Minimum Depth vs. Frost Depth

A frequent problem our inspectors encounter is the attempt to pour trench or grade beam foundations at a 24-inch depth. We understand this confusion often arises because the established frost depth in our region is 24 inches. While 24 inches might prevent freezing issues, it does not address the soil stability requirements of Sedgwick County.

According to the Wichita Foundation Standards:

· Minimum Depth: Even for the highest quality soil (a low PI of 0 to 15), the absolute minimum depth for a footing or grade beam is 30 inches below finished grade.

· Higher PI Soils: As soil expansiveness increases, more reinforcing steel and an even greater footing depth are required to ensure the home remains stable.

Starting a project with a 24-inch trench will result in an automatic inspection failure, leading to unnecessary delays and the added cost of deeper excavation to reach the required 30-inch minimum for habitable structures.

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Electrical Division -

Please visit our website for more information: Electrical, Elevator, & Alarm Division

MABCD Newsletter

All,

This will be my last newsletter as I am turning all newsletter editing over to a new group. For any questions regarding future newsletters, please contact:

Chris Labrum at Christopher.Labrum@sedgwick.gov
Tim Wagner at Tim.Wagner@sedgwick.gov or
Kalyn Nethercot at KaLyn.Nethercot@sedgwick.gov

It has been an honor and a pleasure to bring you the MABCD Newsletter. Our first issue went out on June 1, 2021 and we have now issued 58 Newsletters in an effort to bring everyone the most important topics affecting our community each and every month.

I appreciate all of your wonderful feedback and the appreciation you have shown for this important business tool.

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Mechanical Division -

Please visit our website for more information: Mechanical Division

2024 (IMC) International Mechanical Code Section 306.5.1

IMC 304.11 Guards.

Guards shall be provided where various components that require service and roof hatch openings are located within 10 feet (3048 mm) of a roof edge or open side of a walking surface and such edge or open side is located more than 30 inches (762 mm) above the floor, roof, or grade below. The guard shall extend not less than 30 inches (762 mm) beyond each end of components that require service and each end of the roof hatch parallel to the roof edge. The top of the guard shall be located not less than 42 inches (1067 mm) above the elevated surface adjacent to the guard. The guard shall be constructed so as to prevent the passage of a 21-inch-diameter (533 mm) sphere and shall comply with the loading requirements for guards specified in the International Building Code.

Exception:

Guards are not required where fall arrest/restraint anchorage connector devices that comply with ANSI/ASSP Z359.1 are approved.

*Mechanical equipment and appliances require routine inspection, maintenance, and repair. Where the units requiring service or the roof hatch openings are located within 10 feet (3048 mm), of a roof edge or open side with a drop greater than 30 inches (762 mm), a possibility exists for the service person or inspector to be injured by a fall. Appliances installed on roofs are occasionally accessed during inclement weather, emergency situations and darkness. The requirements of this section are intended to protect personnel from the hazard of falls during all conditions.

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Mechanical Division -

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2024 (IMC) International Mechanical Code Section 306.5.1

IMC 306.5.1 Sloped Roofs.

Where appliances, equipment, fans or other components that require service are installed on a roof having a slope of 3 units vertical in 12 units horizontal (25 percent slope) or greater and having an edge more than 30 inches (762 mm) above grade at such edge, a level platform shall be provided on each side of the appliance or equipment to which access is required for service, repair or maintenance. The platform shall be not less than 30 inches (762 mm) in any dimension and shall be provided with guards. The guards shall extend not less than 42 inches (1067 mm) above the platform, shall be constructed so as to prevent the passage of a 21 -inch-diameter (533 mm) sphere and shall comply with the loading requirements for guards specified in the International Building Code. Access shall not require walking on roofs having a slope greater than 4 units vertical in 12 units horizontal (33 percent slope). Where access involves obstructions greater than 30 inches (762 mm) in height, such obstructions shall be provided with ladders installed in accordance with IMC 306.5 or stairways installed in accordance with the requirements specified in the International Building Code in the path of travel to and from appliances, fans or equipment requiring service.

* A workspace platform with guards will provide protection for service personnel and will facilitate inspection, servicing and repairing appliances, equipment or other components. Working on a sloped surface is difficult, dangerous and results in tools and materials sliding off roofs, possibly endangering persons below. Because of the additional expense and unattractive appearance roof platforms, this section may have the effect of discouraging the installation of appliances on sloped roofs. This section is intended to include equipment such as kitchen exhaust and makeup air fans that require routine servicing.

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MABCD Advisory Boards - Calendar

- Board of Building Code Standards and Appeals (BCSA)
- Board of Electrical Appeals (BEA)
- Board of Appeals of Refrigeration, Air Conditioning, Warm Air Heating, and Boiler
- Board of Appeals of Plumbers and Gas Fitters

March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 MABCD BCSA Board Meeting	3	4	5 MABCD Mechanical Board Meeting	6	7
8	9	10 MABCD Electrical Board Meeting	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 MABCD Plumbing Board Meeting	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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