



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
PEACHTREE SEVENTH BUILDING, ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30323

REGION III

September 5, 1969

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
3CW

Mr. Dan E. Sweat, Jr.  
Chief Administrative Officer  
City of Atlanta  
City Hall  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Mr. Sweat:

This will acknowledge your letter dated August 22, 1969, addressed to Mr. Edward H. Baxter, Regional Administrator, concerning the interpretation of Section 114 of the City of Atlanta's Plumbing Code, which reads as follows:

Sec. 114. Fixture connections between drainage pipes and water closets, Floor-outlet service sinks, pedestal urinals, and earthenware trap standards shall be made by means of brass, hard-lead or iron flanges, calked, soldered or screwed to the drainage pipe. The connection shall be bolted, with an approved gasket or washer or setting compound between the earthenware and the connection. The floor flange shall be set on approved firm base. The use of commercial putty or plaster is prohibited.

Your letter outlines two opposing interpretations of this Section, both of which are centered around the provision that "the floor flange shall be set on an approved firm base." The first interpretation is that the choice of materials is restricted to a slab on grade, which, according to this interpretation, is the only slab that constitutes "an approved firm base" insofar as the use of brass or iron flanges is concerned. The second interpretation is that the intent of the Section is to permit the choice of materials ("brass, hard-lead or iron flanges, calked, soldered, or screwed to the drainage pipe") on slab floors above grade.

As interpreted by Regional Office codes specialists, the purpose of the Section is to permit the choice of all allowable materials on all floors constructed in accordance with building code standards. They point out that any floor of a building constructed in accordance with building code standards should constitute "an approved firm base" and thus, according to the Section as now written, the choice of all allowable materials should apply to any floor so constructed.

In our judgment, the intent, purpose, and correct interpretation of this Section of Atlanta's Plumbing Code can be clarified by amending the code to contain a definition of the term "an approved firm base." A suggested definition is "any base constructed in accordance with building code specifications."

The Section is identical to Section 606.1 of the 1967 Edition of the Southern Standard Plumbing Code. It is also identical with Section P-503.0 of the 1968 Edition of the BOCA Basic Plumbing Code with one exception. The BOCA Plumbing Code specified a "structurally firm base" instead of "an approved firm base." The Department encourages the adoption of codes which contain standards comparable to those contained in nationally recognized model standard codes such as the Southern Standard and the BOCA codes. Thus Section 114 of the Atlanta Plumbing Code meets present Departmental standards as to content and intent if the section is interpreted to permit the choice of allowable materials on all floors constructed to building code specifications. Such an interpretation would also make this Section consistent with a policy of permitting the construction of housing at the lowest possible cost without lowering reasonable standards of safety and durability.

We trust that our comments on this matter will be of some benefit in arriving at an interpretation that will be satisfactory to all parties concerned.

Sincerely yours,

*Karl M. Tompkins*  
for A. Frederick Smith  
Assistant Regional Administrator  
Program Coordination & Services Office

cc: Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr.