

REPORT ON THE PROPOSAL TO AMMEND THE 2019 CPC TO ALLOW
“PROPERLY INSTALLED” ABS AND PVC PLUMBING VENTS AND DRAINS IN
RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS OF MORE THAN TWO STORIES

Due to our proximity to the ocean and the resulting wind borne salt spray and humidity, cast iron vent stacks and drain lines, as required by the California Plumbing Codes to be installed in residential buildings of more than two stories have been found over the years to show significant deterioration and loss of effectiveness in Hermosa Beach in as little as ten years after installation.

Over the years, the basis for this requirement has been to prevent the “chimney effect”; the ability of a fire to spread vertically inside the walls by melting and consuming plastic vent and drain pipes.

Two changes to the codes were adopted in the 2010 Residential Building Code: first, that all new residential buildings had to be completely equipped with fire sprinklers, and that a three story stairway no longer needed to be separated into two, non-connecting shafts (intended to eliminate the “chimney effect” on the stairwell).

Therefore, in light of the corrosive nature of our proximity to the ocean and the changes adopted in the Residential Code, we propose to allow properly installed ABS and PVC plumbing vents and drains (as specified in CPC Table 701.2) in residential structures of more than two stories if enclosed in a one hour fire-rated assembly.

The proper installation of ABS PVC vents shall include the following components:

1. The vents shall be enclosed in one-hour fire rated shafts. Such shaft shall either be comprised of heavy lumber (4x minimum), or a fire resistant drywall product.
2. Where a vent passes through either a story or a fire rated assembly, a listed rated fire collar shall be installed below such a barrier, in accordance with CRC 302.4.1.2