

Information Bulletin

Burial Depth and Protection for Underground Plumbing Pipes

The Manitoba Plumbing Code (MPC) and Manitoba Building Code (MBC) dictate the requirements for protection of underground plumbing pipes as noted in the excerpts below.

Manitoba Plumbing Code excerpt:

2.3.5.1. Protection of Piping

- 1) Underground piping shall be protected
 - a) in the absence of the pipe manufacturer's instructions for backfill, by backfill that is
 - i) placed and compacted to a height of 300 mm over the top of the pipe, and
 - ii) free of stones, boulders, cinders and frozen earth or other material capable of damaging the piping, or
 - b) by concrete that is at least 75 mm thick and at least 200 mm wider than the pipe.

The above MPC Clause 2.3.5.1.(1)(b) allowing protection using 75 mm concrete is a newly permissible method of installation in the 2024 Code and only plumbing permits that are subject to the 2024 MPC may use this method of protection. Standalone plumbing permit applications submitted prior to January 1, 2024 and plumbing permits with associated building permits that are subject to the previous Codes cannot use this installation method.

While the MPC allows protection by concrete that is at least 75 mm thick and at least 200 mm wider than the pipe, code users are reminded that the MBC Sentence 9.16.2.1.(1) requirement for 100 mm of granular material below floors-on-ground remains applicable such that plumbing pipes are required to be below the 100 mm granular material.

Manitoba Building Code excerpt:

9.16.2. Material beneath Floors

9.16.2.1. Required Installation of Granular Material

- 1) Except as provided in Sentence (2), not less than 100 mm of coarse clean granular material containing not more than 10% of material that will pass a 4 mm sieve shall be placed beneath floors-on-ground. (See also Subsection 9.13.4. and Note A-9.13.4.)

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The City **may** consider an exception to the MPC protection requirements for existing housing installations where the height of the main drain (at its highest point prior to entering the building) is not sufficient to provide the required protection noted in MPC Sentence 2.3.5.1.(1). If this condition presents, the contractor must ensure as much depth as possible as well as maintaining the minimum slope requirements. Any permitted reduction to the depth of backfill will be to accommodate specific site conditions and should not be considered precedent setting nor applicable to other sites. Contractors may request an exception to accommodate an existing site condition by contacting ppd-seniorhousinginspect@winnipeg.ca.