Informal Interpretation Report
Number 7836

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Section 301.3

Question:

Is it the intent of section 301.3 to include water fountains that are not located at a building structure (such as in a parks or at youth sports field functions) to be tied into sanitary drainage systems?

Answer

The answer to the question is, "NO."
301.3 addresses only liquid waste or sewage. It's a stretch to conclude that drinking fountain drains contain, "animal or vegetable matter in suspension." Further, FBC - Plumbing 701.2 refers only to buildings. Outdoor showers with no piped drains at all are routinely installed at poolside and near beaches. Some of these are even fitted with drinking bubblers. In a park or ballfield installation, keeping rain water out of any drinking fountain's sanitary drain would be an additional challenge. The only problem with the desired approach is that there is no definitive statement in the Code stating that the proposed installation can be built as described. The requester should present the proposal to the authority having jurisdiction for approval under FBC 2014 104.11, Alternative materials, design and methods of construction and equipment.

Commentary:

Historically, drinking fountains in sports and recreation parks/facilities have been granted an exception to section 301.3 requiring connection to a sanitary system by the AHJ. The exception is based on the difficulty and expense of extending a sanitary line to the location when there is no adjacent structure with a plumbing system. Examples would be bubblers at baseball dugouts and random placement on golf

courses or parks. Technically applying this code section based on the strict definition of liquid waste might be legally defended, however, the potential for deleterious discharge (the intention of the code section is to prevent such) to grade by the use of a drinking fountain would be extremely remote and thus the use of the common-sense exception. The point of discharge would be the only concern as to simply allow the drinking fountain to discharge to grade as opposed to a french style drain could possibly create a nuisance situation if the discharge did not perk into the soil at a sufficient rate. While technically the answer may be yes, most agree that the FBC is not comprehensive enough to rise to a one size fits all in some areas. The purpose of Code Officials is to add an element of discretion in cases such as this.

Notice:
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