



**ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BUILDING CODE COMPLIANCE OFFICE
CODE INTERPRETATION**

6501 Magic Way, Building 100C
Orlando, Florida 32809
Telephone (407) 317-3794
Fax (407) 317-3950

Subject Title: Fencing requirements for backflow preventer.
Applicable Code: Florida Building Code Section 453.10.1.1
Date: April 14, 2021
Revised: N/A

Question: Does the installation of a backflow preventer located at grade level on school property require a fence enclosure?

Answer: FBC Section 453.10.1.1 states that “Fencing is required to separate students from potential harm, and shall be provided in the following locations: Exposed mechanical, plumbing, gas, or electrical equipment located on ground level.” The answer to this question would depend on whether a backflow preventer is considered to be “plumbing equipment”. As per comments below, the answer is yes.

Comment: The term equipment is not defined in the Florida Building Code or the Plumbing Code but is defined in the Mechanical Code and the National Electrical Code. Mechanical Code Section 202 defines equipment as “All piping, ducts, vents, control devices and other components of systems other than appliances which are permanently installed and integrated to provide control of environmental conditions for buildings. This definition shall also include other systems specifically regulated in this code.” The National Electrical Code Section 100 defines equipment as “A general term, including fittings, devices, appliances, luminaires, apparatus, machinery, and the like used as a part of, or in connection with, an electrical installation.

Since the Plumbing Code uses the term device when identifying a backflow preventer there could be some confusion as to whether a device is also considered equipment or not. Both definitions cited above also include the term device in the definition of equipment. Other notable words used in these two definitions include piping, control devices, other components and fittings. The other important terminology to note is that in the fencing requirement it states that “exposed” equipment is required to be enclosed. A back flow prevention device and associated piping is considered to be exposed plumbing unless it is installed in an enclosure above or below grade.