



## San Juan County Community Development & Planning

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### POLICIES / PROCEDURES / INTERPRETATIONS

## Coupling of Pressure Relief Valve Discharge Pipes

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### **ISSUE:**

The Uniform Plumbing Code provides section 608.5 addressing water heater relief valves located inside a building. The code section states, in part, that *"relief valves shall be provided with a drain, not smaller than the relief valve outlet..... which will not reduce the internal bore of the pipe or tubing..... and shall extend from the valve to the outside of the building.....No part of such drain pipe shall be trapped or subject to freezing. The terminal end of the drain pipe shall not be threaded."*

The code is silent on the connection or coupling of multiple discharge pipes. Would it be permissible to connect 2 discharge valves to common discharge piping that runs and terminates in accordance with the provisions of section 608.5?

### **ANALYSIS:**

The pressure/temperature relief valve is an emergency measure required and provided on water heating vessels. The intent is to provide an unimpeded path for hot water to discharge to an exterior location in the event of a failure of the vessel. The stipulation that the discharge piping be the same size as the relief valve assures the flow of discharge remains unrestricted.

When reviewing the question of permissibility of connecting 2 valves to a single discharge pipe, the issue that arises is *"will this serve its intended safety function in the highly unlikely event that both water heating vessels experience simultaneous failure?"*

Consultation with IAPMO (International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials) provides definitive technical guidance. They clearly stated that this configuration is permissible when the discharge pipe is upsized to accommodate the additional flow, in the event of simultaneous failure.

### **POLICY:**

It shall be the policy of San Juan County to allow 2 (two) domestic water heaters to connect to a single discharge pipe, provided the discharge piping is upsized to the next nominal pipe size above the largest valve being coupled. The remainder of the installation shall be in accordance with all other provisions of the Uniform Plumbing Code (current adopted edition.) This policy is specific to domestic water heating devices located in 1 and 2 family dwelling units, or their accessory structures, as regulated by the International Residential Code. It does not presume to modify or waive any other applicable laws, codes, or statutes.