

**SEATTLE / KING COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH**  
**Community Environmental Health**  
**Plumbing / Gas Piping Inspections**

**DECISIONS / INTERPRETATIONS**  
**of the Chief Plumbing Inspector**

**Date:** June 5, 2007

**Decision No. 04-005**  
***REVISED***

**Subject:** Access for Hot Water Tanks

**Code / Section:** UPC Chapter 5

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**Decision.**

The installation of a washer and/or dryer that obstructs the access requirements for a hot water tank is allowed where the following conditions are met:

1. A shut off valve for the water supply shall be installed adjacent to the location of the water heater in an accessible location. The valve shall be identified; and
2. A shut off valve for the gas supply shall be installed adjacent to the location of the water heater in an accessible location. The valve shall be identified. This shut off valve may be in addition to the individual equipment shut off valve required by Section 409.5 of the International Fuel Gas Code.

**Background.**

A water heater must be accessible for inspection, repair or replacement. In some cases, such as with condominium conversions, a stacked-type washer and dryer unit may be located in front of a water heater, thus necessitating their being removed in order to access the water heater. This would not be a violation of the access requirements. However, should the water heater need to be shut down due to a malfunction, access to the water and gas supply should be accessible without having to move other appliances.