

Letters

Learned the Hard Way

Dennis Dixon's "Getting Started in Commercial Real Estate" (2/12) is a good article. I'd like to add two points. First, when preparing your federal taxes, have a discussion with your tax accountant about whether to combine your properties into one entity or keep them separate. There are advantages either way depending on other factors.

Second, become familiar with a regulation known as 469-C, which has to do with your involvement in the day-to-day management of your property. I would advise keeping a daily log. It might be important someday and is tough to put together four years later when they challenge you, especially if your depreciation puts you into a loss. Sign me, been there.

Tony Mallon
Braintree, Mass.

Tread Carefully With Accessible Projects

I'm catching up on my reading, and Greg Burnet's article "Remodeling for Accessibility" (9/11) brought back some memories. I used to design handicap-accessible facilities as a peripheral part of my job, only because there were few other specialists in my area. I learned you have to be very careful indeed before engaging in these projects to make sure all federal and local requirements are met — requirements that take up about 15 pages in an accessibility handbook I own.

My previous employer designed lots of restrooms for business remodels. He found that for a half-bath with only a toilet and sink, the absolute minimum dimensions worked out to about 6 feet 11 inches by 7 feet 1 inch, depending on the dimensions of the fixtures selected. Fortunately, for remodels it's sometimes possible to get a "hardship" exemption for certain requirements because of a space's physical limitations.

Thor Matteson
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Interpreting the RRP

In the February issue, Shawn McCadden responds to a question titled "When the Homeowner Does the Demo" (Q&A). He writes that "to perform work — or even offer to perform work — on a pre-1978 home, you still must be an EPA-certified firm." I believe this is incorrect. You only have to be an EPA-certified lead-safe firm if the RRP rule

applies. There are exceptions to this rule — including emergency work, and minor repairs and maintenance that disturb less than 6 square feet of painted surface.

By the way, my company is an EPA-certified firm, but I think the RRP rule is misguided. For example, it states the exception does not apply to "demolition," even though it's an obvious fact that demolition may not involve painted surfaces and may not disturb more than 6 square feet of surface. I can think of any number of interior remodeling jobs in pre-1978 homes that require some demolition but do not involve painted surfaces — for example, modifications to a wood-paneled office or basement or replacement of natural-finish kitchen cabinets. I also believe the rule should have a permanent opt-out provision.

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Concrete Quantities, Take Two

The 38 80-pound bags of sack concrete mentioned in the article "Contemporary Bathroom Addition" (2/12) will yield only about a yard of concrete, not the two-and-a-half yards stated in the article.

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Cincinnati

Our mistake; thanks for the correction. — The Editors

A Little Friday Humor



Submitted by Brad Caspari
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