INTERPRETATION IC 135-2020-21 OF
ANSI/ASHRAE STANDARD 135-2020 BACnet® -
A Data Communication Protocol for Building
Automation and Control Networks

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Request from: Jim Butler, Cimetrics Inc., 376 Washington St. Ste. 104, Malden, MA 02148.

Reference: This request for interpretation refers to the requirements presented in ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 135-2020, Clauses 13.14.1.3.1, 13.14.2, 13.15.1.3.1, 13.15.2, and 13.16.2, regarding cancellation of a COV subscription.

Background: This interpretation request concerns the situation in which a COV cancellation request is received but the recipient cannot find a corresponding COV context and the object or property specified in the request does not exist. In a SubscribeCOVxxx service request, if neither the 'Lifetime' nor the 'Issue Confirmed Notifications' parameters are present, then the request is to cancel an existing COV subscription.

For the SubscribeCOV service, when the object specified in the service request does not exist, the BACnet standard does not clearly state whether to return Result(+) as implied in the service procedure (13.14.2) or to return Result(-) with Error(OBJECT, UNKNOWN_OBJECT) which is in the list of errors for specific situations (13.14.1.3.1). If the specified object does not exist, then it is extremely likely that there is no matching COV context for that object, and in this case the service procedure states that Result(+) shall be returned: "Cancellations that are issued for which no matching COV context can be found shall succeed as if a context had existed, returning 'Result(+)'."

The same situation can arise with the SubscribeCOVProperty and SubscribeCOVPropertyMultiple services, as well as the situation in which the property specified in the request does not exist within the specified object.

Interpretation: If the object or the property specified in the SubscribeCOVxxx request does not exist, and neither the 'Lifetime' nor the 'Issue Confirmed Notifications' parameters are present (indicating a cancellation request), the recipient may return either Result(+) or Result(-) with an appropriate Error.

Question: Is this Interpretation correct?

Answer: No

Comments: The clause referenced indicates that the intent is that all COV cancellations shall result in Result(+).