



Building Officials Newsletter

Building Standards
July 2000

Nominations for SBAS Appeal Board Sought

The Saskatchewan Building and Accessibility Standards (SBAS) Appeal Board is comprised of up to eight people appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, according to *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act* (the UBAS Act). The role of the Board is to:

- hear and determine owner’s appeals from building official’s orders or from the accessibility standards,
- advise the minister on matters concerning administration of the UBAS Act and regulations, and
- perform any other duties the minister may direct.

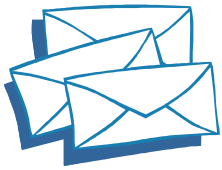
The terms of currently appointed members of the board expire late this year. The Minister of Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing has asked the associations and organizations listed below to nominate people who would be willing to serve a term on the board. The appointees must be residents of Saskatchewan, and should have a working knowledge of the UBAS Act and regulations, and of building construction; be a good communicator; be fair and impartial; and have the ability to assess evidence based on logic and human experience. If you are a member of any of the following groups and are interested in being nominated by one of these groups, please contact them. Each group is encouraged to submit the names of two or three nominees. If you are a member of a group that you believe should be included in the following list, please contact Building Standards at the addresses or numbers shown on the back page of this newsletter.

Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan
 Building Owners and Managers Association (Regina and Saskatoon Chapters)
 Canadian National Institute for the Blind
 Canadian Paraplegic Association
 Construction Specifications Canada (Regina and Saskatoon Chapters)
 Interior Designers Association of Saskatchewan
 Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians
 Saskatchewan Association of Architects
 Saskatchewan Association of Fire Chiefs
 Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
 Saskatchewan Building Officials Association
 Saskatchewan Construction Association
 Saskatchewan Home Builders’ Association
 Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission

Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation
 Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association
 Saskatchewan Voice of People with Disabilities

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Readers' Letters

Margaret,

A couple of points about your article on "Accidental Death Rates" [April 2000]. First, the CCFM/FC [Council of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners] published total fire deaths for 1995 were 400 while this article indicates 314. Is there a difference in the reports that results in almost 100 fewer by the Canada Safety Council?

Secondly, of the top 5 causes, all except fire occur in ones and twos rather than large numbers at once. Fire has the potential to cause numerous deaths in the same incident and, from my personal perspective, that is the reason we spend a lot of effort on fire safety in building codes, especially in non-residential occupancies. A true picture would be to compare the risk of dying in a fire in Canada versus the risk of dying from the other top 4 causes...but that's a different piece of research that would be fascinating to do.

Ken Richardson, Gloucester ON

If you wish to comment on anything you've read in the Building Officials Newsletter, please send your letter to us by fax, e-mail or post-mail at the addresses listed on the last page.

New Publications Available

Concrete Construction for Housing and Small Buildings, CSA standard A438-00, 3rd edition, CSA International, 1-800-463-6727 or www.csa-international.org. This standard addresses unreinforced concrete construction of housing and small buildings, as covered in Part 9 of the National Building Code of Canada, as well as other concrete work such as slabs-on-ground, driveways, steps, walkways, patios, and parking areas. §

Tall Walls Workbook, Canadian Wood Council, downloadable pdf format at www.wood-works.org or printed form by fax (613) 747-6264. A concise 56-page guide to designing wood stud walls up to 35 ft. for single-storey, non-residential buildings such as warehouses, factories and strip malls. §

CSA International's Built Environment Program

CSA's 500-plus Built Environment Standards cover everything from nails to nuclear power stations. Many of these standards are referenced in the national model building, fire and plumbing codes. CSA has announced a restructuring and renewed commitment to its standards, in order to be more responsive to the needs of regulators, consumers and industry. The new structure groups standards under broad topic areas: 1) Construction, Construction Products and Materials, and 2) Energy and Utilities. This promotes greater efficiency in application of resources, and collaboration and joint opportunities among interrelated industries. For more information, visit the CSA International website at www.csa-international.org. §

Roof Covering Classifications

Roof coverings on all buildings that fall under Part 3 of the National Building Code of Canada (NBC) 1995 (other than tents, air-supported structures or certain assembly buildings) are required by Article 3.1.15.2. to have a Class A, B, or C classification. This classification must be determined in accordance with CAN/ULC-S107-M "Standards Method of Fire Tests of Roof Coverings."

Roof covering classifications do not apply to individual materials—the materials are only components in classified systems. For example, the Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC) "List of Equipment and Materials, Building Materials," lists materials that are tested and certified to the requirements of CAN/ULC-S107-M, but it also contains a description of how the tested materials must be combined or constructed to form systems that are classified to provide Class A, B, and C roof coverings. A similar listing is included in Underwriters' Laboratories (UL) "Certified for Canada Directory."

The classifications in these listings only apply to roof covering systems that completely conform to the descriptions in the listing, including use of labelled materials. All components and component assemblies meet the requirements of CAN/ULC-S107-M before the roof covering system can bear the ULC or cUL mark. §

You Wanted to Know ...

Can a member of the council of a municipality act as that municipality's building official?

Municipal legislation appears to provide the answer to this question. Subsection 62(3) of *The Urban Municipality Act, 1984* and Section 53 of *The Rural Municipality Act, 1989* prohibit the appointment of elected officials as municipal employees.

We must rely on these provisions in the UM and RM Acts, because *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act* does not answer this question. The single limitation that is imposed by the UBAS Act is that municipalities are only permitted to appoint licensed building officials. So all persons who hold a valid building official licence, even a member of the council, would be eligible for appointment. Building officials licences are issued based on a person demonstrating building code knowledge and having applicable education and/or experience, as set out in *The Building and Accessibility Standards Administration Regulations*. Anyone who had been appointed by a municipality before these regulations came into effect in May of 1997, and who was working under a continuing appointment was not required to obtain a licence. But they could not be reappointed or appointed by another municipality until they did.

It is interesting to note that there does not appear to be anything in the UM Act that would prevent a council member from having interest in a company that provides building official services to the same municipality. A municipality cannot appoint a company as their building official, because a company cannot obtain a building official's licence under the UBAS Act. But the municipality could pay a company to provide building official services if the council appoints the building official who is working for the company and providing the services. So, if a council member holds a building official licence and is employed by a company providing building official services to the same municipality where he or she serves as a council member, it seems possible that council members could be appointed by the municipality as their building official and not contravene the UM Act. Sections 19 and 20 of the RM Act may reduce the possibility of this happening in a rural municipality.

Please remember that you must contact your solicitor for legal advice about the legislation in your particular situation. §



Visit the
Saskatchewan
Building Officials
Association's
website

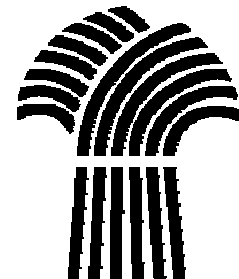
www.sboa.sk.ca
for news and
views about

building code enforcement in
Saskatchewan. The site
provides information about
SBOA membership and
conferences, building code
training, building official
licences, contract services, and
much, much more.

And while you're in
cyberspace, why not check out
the Saskatchewan Municipal
Affairs, Culture and Housing
website

www.municipal.gov.sk.ca for
more information.

This site is
still being
developed, so
let us know
what
information
would be
useful.



Building Durability

Everyone who owns a vehicle realizes that the vehicle requires regular maintenance and replacement of worn out parts for it to run properly. So does a building. However, the expectations for a building are often undefined. How long will a building be serviceable? How often and what type of maintenance is required? How long will building elements last before they must be replaced? And when the expectations are much higher than the performance, the resulting problems can range from inconvenient to costly.

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) and partners developed S478-95 "Guideline on Durability in Buildings" that was first published in 1995. Durability is defined as "the ability of a building or any of its components to perform its required functions in its service environment over a period of time without unforeseen cost for maintenance and repair." The guideline provides "good practice" advice for designers, builders, and the rest of the construction industry. It addresses quality assurance, design and predicted service lives, design and construction considerations, operations and maintenance, inspections, and repair and renovations. Copies of S478-95 can be obtained from CSA by contacting them toll free at 1-800-463-6727 or visiting their website at www.csa-international.org.

The Canadian Wood Council and Forintek Canada Corp. have jointly launched a new website on building durability — www.durable-wood.com. This site includes sections on building science, building solutions, events, and hot topics. The Canadian Wood Council can be reached at www.cwc.ca or call them toll free at 1-800-463-5091. §

Smoke Alarms ... A Review

- ➔ A smoke alarm combines smoke detection and alarm sounding together in one unit.
- ➔ All smoke alarms in Canada must meet the Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC) standard, CAN/ULC S-531 "Smoke Alarms."
- ➔ An ionization type smoke alarm uses a small amount of radioactive material to ionize air in the sensing chamber. As a result, the air chamber becomes conductive permitting current to flow between two charged electrodes. When smoke particles enter the chamber, the conductivity of the chamber air decreases. When this reduction in conductivity reaches a predetermined level, the alarm is set off. Most smoke alarms in use are of this type.
- ➔ A photoelectric type smoke alarm consists of a light emitting diode and a light sensitive sensor in the sensing chamber. The presence of suspended smoke particles in the chamber scatters the light beam. This scattered light is detected and sets off the alarm.
- ➔ The two types operate on different principles and therefore may respond differently to various conditions. Photoelectric smoke alarms may respond slightly faster to smouldering fires, while ionization alarms respond slightly faster to flaming fires. Both alarms will detect all types of fires that commonly occur in homes. To achieve ULC listing, both alarms must be tested in the same manner and meet the same requirements of the standard.
- ➔ Smoke alarms are required in all new dwelling units and sleeping rooms not within dwelling units, in accordance with Article 3.2.4.21. and Subsection 9.10.18 of the National Building Code of Canada 1995. Additional guidance about installation is included in the manufacturer's instructions.
- ➔ Smoke alarms are provided with test features to allow regular testing of the unit. Manufacturers also supply instructions as to how to test their units properly.
- ➔ Dust and grime can affect the operation of a smoke alarm. If necessary, instructions for care and maintenance must be posted in a readily available location. If a smoke alarm is more than ten years old, it likely should be replaced. §

Public Review of National Codes Objectives

By now, most everyone who has regular contact with the building code has heard that our national model codes are being converted to an objective-based format. Standing committees of the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes (CCBFC) have devoted most of their efforts over the last three years to conducting a bottom-up analysis of the codes. In this analysis, the specific intent of each code requirement and the overall code objective(s) it is related to have been identified. All three of the national model codes (building, plumbing, and fire) have been subjected to this analysis.

Further examination of the individual objectives has led the CCBFC to conclude that the broad objectives of **Safety, Health and Accessibility** accurately describe many of the widely-accepted code requirements. However, they also discovered that there are many requirements that do not fall under these three broad categories.

The CCBFC is preparing proposals to deal with these other requirements. They could be eliminated, retained but examined further, or confirmed as widely-accepted code objectives. During the planned public review this fall, the CCBFC will ask code users whether they agree with these proposals. The review will also ask for comment on the proposed format of the objective-based codes. **Watch for further information on how you can participate in this review.**

The public review this fall will also serve as “beta test” of the new code development system in Canada. All the provinces and territories have agreed to work with the National Research Council to develop and review changes to the national model codes. In Saskatchewan, we hope to rely on the expertise of the Canadian Codes Centre staff and avoid any duplication of tasks. The impact of implementing the new code development system will be assessed and appropriate changes will be made before the next public review.

The next joint public review is currently scheduled for mid-2002. Proposed technical changes to the 1995 codes and full objective-based version of the codes (1995 content) will be reviewed. §

Online Building Envelope Workshop

Across Canada, there is an increasing emphasis on research and education about building envelopes. A building envelope can be described as an assembly that acts as an environmental separator, generally between the inside and outside of a building. When dissimilar environments exist on either side of this assembly (indoor conditioned spaces opposite unconditioned spaces, the outdoors or the ground) specific measures need to be taken to prevent unwanted transmission of heat, moisture, and air.

The Architectural Institute of British Columbia and the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia jointly administer a Building Envelope Education Program that can lead to designation as a Building Envelope Professional. The first module of this program, an introduction to management of the environmental forces acting on building materials and building envelope assemblies, is now available as a web-based workshop through the Open Learning Agency. It is designed for professionals and others connected with design and/or construction of building envelopes, development of regulations and standards that apply to building envelopes, and planning and developing building projects. It is a resource for anyone interested in learning about the management of environmental loads on building envelopes.

Participants can work at their own pace, but must complete the workshop in four months to obtain full credit. The course fee is \$475. For more information or to register, go to <http://openet.ola.bc.ca/arct501>. For more information about the Open Learning Agency courses visit www.ola.bc.ca or call toll free in Canada 1-800-663-9711. §

SPAG News

by Tim Macaulay, Saskatchewan Health

NOTE: The Saskatchewan Plumbing Advisory Group (SPAG) has not met since our last newsletter. Those who have questions regarding SPAG should contact Mr. Tim Macaulay, Saskatchewan Health at (306) 787-7128, fax (306) 787-3237, or e-mail tmacaula@health.gov.sk.ca.

Survey on Saskatchewan's Building Code

We didn't get an overwhelming response to our request with the April 2000 issue of this newsletter. Most of those who responded were building officials, but some municipal officials, fire officials, engineers, technologists, and suppliers also answered. Here's what they said.

- Most are satisfied with the balance between construction cost-effectiveness and the code objectives.
- Most are satisfied or very satisfied with the opportunity to become involved in development and review of the national building code.
- Most are satisfied with the opportunity to become involved in development and review of the Saskatchewan building regulations.
- The most preferred ways to get involved were by receiving newsletters and direct mailings, and by providing comments on proposals. The least preferred way was to sit on a national code committee.
- Most are satisfied with the Saskatchewan systems for resolving disputes, introducing new technologies, and obtaining advice and opinions.
- Most have not used e-mail to ask questions of Building Standards or the Canadian Codes Centre, but those who have are generally satisfied.
- Approximately half have visited the Canadian Codes Centre website.
- Almost everyone would subscribe to an e-mail news service for building code related information.

Technical issues of concern include sound transmission ratings for impact noise on floors of multi-unit residential buildings, ventilation requirements for dwellings, indoor air quality, and stucco.

Thank you to all who submitted their responses. §

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Comments, suggestions and constructive criticism about this newsletter are welcomed.

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HAVE THINGS CHANGED? Please send us your corrections.
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