

COCA WCB Update #381 November 19, 2007

Council of Construction Associations

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COCA Success on GFCI Issue Saves Est. \$67.5 Million per Year

As reported on November 2, 2007, COCA successfully lobbied for a solution to the GFCI issue that threatened construction safety and efficiency.

In a document distributed on April 13, 2007, WorkSafeBC served notice that GFCIs must be in place for construction or demolition activities that are outdoors or in damp or wet conditions.

WorkSafeBC had previously accepted an Assured Grounding Program as “another acceptable means of protection” under its Regulation 19.15.

The new practice from WorkSafeBC is the result of a change to the Canadian Electrical Code, Part 1, which was revised to take effect in 2007. The BC electrical Safety Regulation adopts this regulation for British Columbia.

COCA’s raised major concerns about this change. The BC Safety Authority, which is responsible for the electrical safety code in BC, has responded with a Variance program, at no cost. (See November 2, 2007 COCA Newsletter or contact COCA for details.)

The estimated savings on the GFCI initiative are based on an estimate from a contractor with 200 workers. He estimated time

savings of \$600 per day; \$12,000 per month or \$144,000 per year. These time savings are from repeated lost productivity caused by the need to stop work and re-set the GFCIs and the occasional need for another worker to do nothing but reset the GFCIs.

On a conservative basis, the employers of 50% of the Construction Industry's 180,000 workers would require GFCIs and would experience similar savings. This equals 90,000 workers. The savings for the Construction Industry are therefore estimated at $90,000 / 200 \times \$144,000$.

This equals a savings of \$64.8 million dollars each year.

In addition, the GFCIs cost about \$20 over and above the cost of a standard outlet. The contractor with 200 workers estimated the need for 300 GFCIs for the company's five sites, at a cost of \$6,000.

Using the same calculation as above, this works out to a cost of \$2.7 million.

Total estimated savings are therefore \$67.5 million.