

## **Council of Construction Associations**

#138 - 5751 Cedarbridge Way,

Richmond, B.C. V6X 2A8

Telephone (604) 241-7667 Fax (604) 241-7678

email: [grantmcmillan@shaw.ca](mailto:grantmcmillan@shaw.ca)

Grant McMillan, President

COCA WCB Update #422 November 28, 2008

### Input Requested on Proposed Change to Height of Wood Buildings

I am enclosing, below, some information on proposed changes from the Building Policy Branch. The information was sent to me by Warren Perks Vice President and Director of Industry Practices at the BC Construction Association.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please forward them to Warren at 250-475-1077. Email: [perks@bccassn.com](mailto:perks@bccassn.com)

The Building Policy Branch is seeking input regarding the course of construction (CoC) fire safety issues relating to six storey wood frame construction and BCCAs participation in the creation of a guideline. We are looking for contractor input. For more information on the public review process relating to the code change for six storey wood frame construction that is currently underway refer to [http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/wood\\_frame/index.htm](http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/wood_frame/index.htm)

- From: "Nicol, John HSD:EX" <[John.Nicol@gov.bc.ca](mailto:John.Nicol@gov.bc.ca)>

In the course of the stakeholder advisory process for 6 storey wood buildings, substantial concern was expressed about fire safety risks -- particularly during the course of construction. Our second fire safety Technical Advisory Group (TAG) took place the day after the Quattro fire in

Surrey and the dramatic media coverage of this and other recent construction fires may still be influencing stakeholder and public confidence in wood buildings and limiting the enthusiasm of some local governments to approve mid-rise wood buildings in their jurisdictions.

While BSPB has undertaken to ensure that fire risks will not increase as we raise the height of wood frame buildings, the building code does not provide clear direction or much in the way of regulatory tools to address CoC fires. As we discussed at the October 2 TAG meeting and again at a meeting with the Fire Services Liaison group on November 7, the most effective way to reduce the risk of CoC fires is likely to be education and training of everyone at the job site. To this end, I have had preliminary discussions with WCB about ways of involving their site inspectors in raising awareness of the consequences of risky behavior such as failing to have a fire extinguisher handy when undertaking hot works and smoking in areas with a lot of combustible construction debris. Of course, intentional fires present the greatest risk. At our October 2 Fire Safety meeting, a number of suggestions were made about how to make job sites less 'tempting' to fire bugs, including improving site security and arranging 'just in time' delivery of combustible building materials.

I would like to propose that representatives of the stakeholder groups copied on this e-mail put our heads together to come up with a tool kit of fire-safe CoC practices to provide as advice to developers and contractors and to explore the potential to increase oversight of CoC fire risks during site visits by WCB reps and local building officials. The most efficient way of approaching this may be to invite each of you to contribute your ideas and perspectives to me. I will undertake to roll up the input and share a draft CoC Fire Safety Strategy with each of you. We may then decide to meet face to face to debate and finalize the contents of the plan. It would also be useful to hear from each group

whether they may have financial or other resources that may be available for this education/training effort. My preference would be to complete the strategy by the end of January 2009, so it would be of use to those planning mid-rise wood buildings in the near future.