

Safety Codes Services Newsletter

Planning & Development Services

City of Medicine Hat
580 – 1 Street SE
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 8E6
Phone: 403-529-8374
Fax: 403-502-8038
pbe@medicinehat.ca

GENERAL ITEMS

Safety Codes Services field inspection services will not be available October 26, 2016.

All of our Safety Codes Officers will be attending a Regional Meeting being hosted in Medicine Hat by Municipal Affairs and Safety Codes Council. These regional meetings are important and give our SCO's the opportunity to raise issues and discuss local concerns to the provincial level.

Please ensure to arrange and schedule your required inspections accordingly so that there is minimal interruption to your projects and subcontractors.

BUILDING

- 1) **Energy Codes come into effect November 1, 2016.** Safety Codes Services are currently working on generating additional checklists that will hopefully help building owners and designers prepare complete design drawings to ensure adequate information is provided during the permit application process. If you have any questions or would like to be included in the current round of stakeholder engagements, please contact either Darcy Gertner or Zane DesRoches through the general department line, 403-529-8374.
- 2) **Alberta Permit Regulations AR 204/2007** has been updated and includes changes that affect our permit intake process. In the past, permits were not required to re-side or re-roof an existing building. Even though permits were not required, the work was still required to comply with the Building Code. The Permit Regulation wording has now been clarified to exempt permits for re-siding and re-roofing, providing the siding or roofing is being replaced with similar materials. This means, if you are removing these elements completely and replacing with a different material, permits are now required.
 - a. Re-roofing example: If you are replacing asphalt shingles with asphalt shingles on an existing roof, no permits would be required. The new regulations require permits if you are going from one roofing material to another. This is important when roof slopes are outside the range permitted by certain products. We have

seen built-up tar and gravel roofs being removed and replaced with asphalt shingles or metal roofing. Unfortunately, the minimum slopes for asphalt shingles and metal roofing is 2/12 and 3/12 respectively. Using these products on roofs constructed with slopes less than that (typical tar and gravel) would be in violation of the Building Code.

- b. When re-siding a building, a permit would be required if you remove the existing cladding down to the wall framing material, and install a new cladding system (e.g. remove old stucco and replace with vinyl). We see this situation frequently on retro jobs when an owner wants to increase the effect R-value of an existing wall assembly, without removing interior finishes. In this case, a permit would be required and all work must comply with the current Building Codes. Two planes of protection (weather barrier c/w flashings and cladding) would be required.

As always, if there are structural changes to the supporting elements of the roofing or siding, then permits would be required - no matter the materials being used. These changes in the permit process will become effective January 1, 2017.

- 3) **Alberta Permit Regulations AR 204/2007** also included changes regarding exterior decks less than 24" above grade. Previously, policy required a permit if the deck was attached to a building, no matter the height above grade. Changes to the regulation, now exempt all decks less than 24" above grade that are attached or detached from a Single Family Dwelling. Effective immediately, we will no longer enforce permitting on decks less than 24" above grade.
- 4) **Failure to Call for Inspections** regarding the placement of manufactured homes has become a concern. When a permit is issued for the placement of the home, two inspections must be completed **BEFORE** the home can be occupied.
 - a. Foundations must be inspected when the home is first placed and **BEFORE** exterior perimeter skirting is installed. Skirting, landings, decks, and stairs shall not be installed until the foundation is approved by a Safety Codes Officer.
 - b. Final inspection must be approved prior to occupancy. Final approval will not be given if the following deficiencies are noted:
 - i. Missing or incomplete perimeter skirting – skirting must be installed to allow at least 2" of vertical movement due to deflections of the manufactured home and frost action.
 - ii. Missing or incomplete landings and stairs – each door of the manufactured home must be protected by an approved landing (36"x36") and stairs leading to ground level. These landings are required and are included in the permit fees to place the homes. Landings larger than 36"x36" are considered decks and require additional permits. If decks are found to have been built without permits, occupancy will not be permitted.

If it is found that a manufactured home is occupied prior to the required, approved Final inspection, the landowner/applicant may be subject to additional fines and penalties.

ELECTRICAL

- 1) **Service upgrades/changes** - as per the newsletter from May 2016, please remember to book inspections for service upgrades/changes. We are no longer automatically doing these inspections on the same day as Electric Utility attends the site.
- 2) **Temporary electrical services** - as of September 1, 2016, the Electric Utility will not connect temporary electrical services until they have passed inspection. Temporary services are getting better, but, many still need repair work completed before they will be connected. Electric Utility's process is as follows:
 - a. Administration will ask electrician if he has already spoken/booked with an electrical inspector
 - b. Administration will check permit on file to ensure the permit outcome is "passed"
 - c. If permit does not say "passed," temporary service will not be installed (advise electrician they must contact inspector)
- 3) **Electrical connections** on a modular or mobile home - please ensure that the skirting by the bonding/grounding connections is left off so that we can complete the required electrical inspections.
- 4) **Working without permits** - we are still seeing electrical work being completed without the required permit(s) in place. Ensure that permits are in place BEFORE work is started.

INSPECTIONS

Access for Inspections is still an ongoing issue. Although it is the Owners responsibility to arrange for required inspections, the contractor who applied for the permit usually books the inspection. We are finding there are times when we are asked to call first, or arrive within a certain time frame, and there is no one home to let our inspectors into the building to complete the inspection. There have been incidents where we have attempted 2 or 3 times to get into a building, yet no access is provided. Effective September 1, 2016, if a contractor or a homeowner arranges an inspection under a permit, and there is no access available when the inspector arrives, the inspection will be flagged as a NO ENTRY, and a penalty fee of \$136.50 will be added to the permit and invoiced to the applicant/contractor. If the fee cannot be invoiced, the applicant/contractor will have to come into City Hall to pay the fine. No further inspections will be completed until the fine is paid or invoiced. This will be enforced on all permit types and disciplines.

Note: APPLICANTS OPPOSED TO EXTRA INSPECTION FEES, MAY REQUEST REVIEW BY THE GENERAL MANAGER OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES. THE DECISION OF THE GENERAL MANAGER MAY BE APPEALED TO THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (CAO). THE DECISION OF THE CAO WILL BE FINAL AND BINDING.