



Media Release

CWC Technical Note on Construction Site Fire Safety Mirrors Much of Proposed Surrey Guidelines *Re: Wood Frame Developer to adopt Fire Chief's recommendations*

Monday, July 25, 2011 - The Canadian Wood Council (CWC) acknowledges and supports the recent announcement by the Remy project developer Oris Consulting Ltd., which has stated its plans to use new construction site fire safety recommendations contained in the Construction Fire Safety Plan Bulletin released on Friday, July 22, by Surrey Fire Chief Len Garis. Dana Westermarck, president of Oris Consulting Ltd., intends to use recommendations from the bulletin that are not already in place when rebuilding the project, which is expected to begin sometime in August.

The CWC also supports ongoing efforts to educate stakeholders on the minimum requirements and best practices for construction site fire safety. Chief Garis, also president of the Fire Chiefs' Association of British Columbia, worked with developers and fire protection professionals to publish the Construction Fire Safety Plan Bulletin that specifically provides guidance to owners, contractors and workers on the requirements for establishing construction site fire safety plans in the City of Surrey. The bulletin will be shared with other local governments across the province in an effort to keep construction sites safer. It is intended as an addendum to one issued in 2009 by the Office of the Fire Commissioner on fire risk during construction. According to Chief Garis, "This bulletin addresses fire risks in any jurisdiction, and describes construction fire prevention strategies at a more operational level." The construction fire prevention recommendations and guidelines in the bulletin address leading causes of construction site fires, including arson and hot works, and call for sprinklers and fire doors to be installed and activated at an earlier stage in construction.

In light of the Remy construction site fire, which increased the focus on construction site fire safety, and to complement earlier CWC publications on this topic, CWC is developing and will soon release a compact 'Technical Note' document on the topic. The CWC Technical Note will discuss the different issues and mitigating factors considered to be critical for addressing construction site fire safety and will mirror many of the points outlined in the Surrey bulletin.

The vulnerability of any building in a fire situation is higher during the construction phase, when compared to the susceptibility of the building after it has been completed and occupied. The CWC Technical Note and the new recommendations from Chief Garis reinforce the importance of compliance with provincial fire code regulations related to fire safety planning and the need for cooperation between all stakeholders in establishing the plan. Both documents will be helpful for builders and developers in their adoption and implementation of specific fire safety procedures and approaches to reduce the potential risk and impacts of a fire on any of their construction sites.

CWC, through its Wood *WORKS!* B.C. program, and in addition to the release of its new publication, will also be presenting technical seminars on this subject during a fall wood seminar program.

For more than 50 years, the CWC has been at the forefront of wood-related code issues - most notably those related to fire. The organization's work has resulted in a better understanding of wood's capabilities and its place in the Code. The CWC was one of several stakeholders consulted by the provincial government before it approved revision of the B.C. Building Code to permit six-storey wood frame construction.

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