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British Columbia Code and Safety Issues Update

There have been several recent developments in BC that are affecting members of CIPH. This is an update to inform members of the work that is being done on their behalf and provide some recommendations on how to deal with these issues.

Water Heater Venting Issue

CIPH was informed that a safety directive was recently issued by the BC Safety Authority concerning plastic venting systems for gas water heaters. The directive issued in August 2010 called for strict enforcement of the original safety bulletin issued in October of 2008. As a result, it would appear that some installers were required to change installed venting systems to meet the new requirements that only CPVC can be used for such venting.

The BC Safety Authority requirement for higher temperature resistant CPVC venting systems addressed concerns that potential for higher-than-normal flue temperatures is a fire safety concern, especially in wood frame buildings. As a result, the testing procedures for CSA certification have been changed and new requirements for power-vented hot water heaters will come into effect in late 2011. This change validates the concern that the BC Safety Authority identified and enforcement of the directive will continue.

While the original directive was issued in 2008, it appears that awareness was low and when the enforcement directive of 2010 was issued, many industry members were caught unawares and mistakenly thought that this was a new directive. CIPH has been consulting the authorities on behalf of the stakeholders to help ensure that such situations are not repeated and communication efforts are improved by both regulators and industry to minimize future disruptions.

CIPH Recommendations

All installers should follow this directive and install only CPVC venting unless the hot water heater manufacturer can provide documentation that their product flue temperatures do not exceed 65°C (149°F). We suggest that wholesale distributors provide a copy of the directive for their customers and inform sales staff of the correct vent pipe specification when selling hot water heaters.

The BC Safety Authority now offers an email update service and CIPH recommends that all contractors, wholesalers and manufacturers sign up for this free service to receive updates, news and regulation changes by email or on your mobile phone. Click on this link to sign up. <http://www.safetyauthority.ca/>

CIPH will continue to alert its members to any changes in regulations that it is made aware of and asks that members forward any information that may be useful to aid in this communication.

*Water Closet Attachment and the BCBC Requirements
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Water Closet Attachment and the BC Building/Plumbing Code Requirements

CIPH was recently informed of concerns over inspection of toilet fixtures in the lower mainland in BC. This deals with certain types of water closets that do not attach directly to the floor flange as required by the BC Building/Plumbing Code requirement.

The wording of this requirement is as follows:

7.3.3.8.(4) BCBC/2.3.3.8.(4) NPC

“Every floor flange shall be securely set on a firm base and bolted to the *trap* flange of the *fixture*.”

Some BC code authorities are using the literal interpretation of the code wording, with the result that some installations are being rejected at great cost and inconvenience to the suppliers and installers, while other similar installations are being passed. This uneven application of enforcement is causing confusion in the marketplace for manufacturers, wholesalers and installers.

In the lower mainland of BC, each municipality is considered an authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) and can apply the code as they see fit. Since a method of attaching the WC with a bracket has been accepted by some jurisdictions, this method should be considered an alternative solution, but to get a uniform interpretation across BC it is necessary to deal with multiple jurisdictions. CIPH will be working with these building officials toward uniform application of existing codes to new products but this will take some time.

CIPH Recommendations

At this time, CIPH recommends that the approach to get acceptance would be to inform the local AHJ that there are alternative solutions for attaching the WC. This concept is allowed under the objectives-based codes that are in force in all Canadian jurisdictions but as final acceptance of the alternative solution rests with the AHJ, consultation and discussion will be required with each AHJ in question. We suggest that manufacturers, wholesalers and installers all communicate with local building officials in the areas under question. CIPH can assist with contact information.

In cases of certified products, it has been established that these products meet the criteria for a proper seal between the fixture and the flange and this assurance can be provided either by proving performance according to the CSA B45 standard or a report from a consultant.

CIPH will update its members on any progress made in discussions with building officials.

*High Efficiency Toilet Requirement Delayed to October 2011
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High Efficiency Toilet Requirement Delayed to October 2011

Effective October 3, 2011, HETs or dual-flush toilets will be required in new residential buildings or when renovations involving plumbing fixtures occur and whenever urinals are installed, HEUs will be required. This is a postponement of an order that was originally set to come into force on October 4, 2010. The new date will address implementation issues and better coordinate with the next edition of the BC Building Code. The requirement will also give suppliers time to reduce existing inventory and bring in new HET stock.

High-Efficiency Toilets

High-efficiency toilets (HETs) have a maximum flush volume of 4.8 litres. Dual-flush toilets are classified as HETs because the ratio of reduced flushes (up to 4.1 litres) to full flushes (up to 6 litres) results in an effective flush volume that is less than 4.8 litres.

Until further research on drainline transport issues becomes available, the BC Building Code's HET requirement will be limited to residential buildings and the requirement for toilets with a maximum flush cycle of 6 litres in industrial, commercial and institutional buildings will remain unchanged.

High-Efficiency Urinals

A high-efficiency urinal (HEU) is a fixture with a flush volume of 1.9 litres or less. HEUs use approximately one-third of the amount of water used to flush the average urinal. Whenever urinals are installed, HEUs will be required.

CIPH Recommendations

All manufacturers and wholesalers should notify industry members of this new implementation date. We recommend that your communications include contractors, installers, engineers and architects to help ensure a smooth transition of supply and inventory management.

CIPH and the CIPH BC Region continues to represent member interests and assist in resolving all issues that come to their attention. CIPH will continue to alert its members to any changes in regulations that it is made aware of and asks that members forward any information that may be useful to aid in this communication.

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The Canadian Institute of Plumbing & Heating is a not-for-profit trade association. Founded in 1933, the Institute is a vibrant organization committed to providing members with the tools for success in today's competitive environment. More than 250 companies are members of this influential Canadian industry association. They are the manufacturers, wholesaler distributors, master distributors, manufacturers' agents and allied companies who manufacture and distribute plumbing, hydronic heating, industrial, waterworks and other mechanical products. CIPH wholesalers operate more than 700 warehouses and showrooms across Canada. Total industry sales exceed \$5 billion annually.

