



LEAKY CONDOS

While waiting in a long line for a ferry recently, with nothing to do and in pelting rain, I noticed how the windows of vehicles are constructed to keep out even heavy driving rain. Perhaps we take it for granted, but start looking at car windows: you'll be amazed. There are all kinds of shapes and sizes but, interestingly, they work. That is to say they keep water out! What is even more amazing is that many car windows and frames are curved (in every direction) and the glass can go up and down.

So what's the point? Well, the point is that windows and window frames can be waterproof. I recall decades ago that car buyers had problems with leaky windows. But the automakers learned quickly that they had to fix the problem or lose out to the competition. So they designed and built better windows and today they work without problems. It can be done. Too bad the same mentality has not prevailed when it comes to residential buildings. What we have instead is the soggy and sorry mess called "Leaky Condos".

BUILDING ENVELOPE REPAIR REGULATIONS

After September 30th, repair contractors will have to be licensed by the Homeowner Protection Office and provide a mandatory, third-party warranty in order to get a building permit for applicable building envelope repairs.

These regulations do not apply to the following categories:

- Buildings with only one or two self contained dwelling units.
- Hotels and motels.
- Dormitories, care facilities or floating homes.
- Repairs carried out by the original builder at no cost to the owner.
- Buildings covered with Homeowner Protection Act legislated warranty insurance.
- Buildings with repair costs less than a total of \$10,000 or \$2,000 per unit in the building.

Licensing:

After September 30th, 2000, a repair contractor must be licensed as a building envelope renovator by the Homeowner Protection Office in order to engage in, arrange or manage building envelope renovations.

In order to get a building permit for repairs, repair contractors must prove that they are licensed and that the home to be repaired is covered by a third-party warranty.

Building envelope renovator license fees are \$100 for licensed residential builders, otherwise the fee is \$600. An additional \$25 per unit is also charged as part of the licensing fee. Annual renewal fees are \$500 (only one \$500 renewal fee is required for those acting as both licensed residential builders for new construction and licensed building



envelope renovators). An additional \$25 per unit is charged as part of the renewal licensing fee. Licensing fees fund the program areas of the Homeowner Protection Office (licensing, research and education and the reconstruction program).

Building envelope renovators must complete a renovation schedule and provide it to the strata corporation / owner(s) before applying for a building permit.

Repair Warranties:

After September 30th, repair contractors applying for building permits to repair building envelopes must provide a third party warranty by an insurance company approved by the Financial Institutions Commission and meet the requirements of the Homeowner Protection Act and regulations.

Minimum coverage and standards for repair warranty insurance are now set by regulations. Minimum coverage will always include two years on labour and materials. If 60 per cent or more of any wall is replaced, an additional five-year warranty on water penetration is provided.

At the request of the strata council / owner(s), a dispute with the warranty insurance company can be handled through mandatory third-party mediation.

For further information, visit the Homeowner Protection Office website at <http://www.hpo.bc.ca/> and the Ministry website at <http://www.gov.bc.ca/sdes/>. The HPO office telephone number is 1-800-407-7757.

If you are looking for further information on leaky condos, please review other articles in this section of our web site, and visit the following sites:

- www.propacificarchitecture.com/propac/propac.resources/bulletin10raincomes.html: Pro Pacific Architecture Ltd. bulletin on building and protecting wood frame construction during wet weather
- www.myleakycondo.com/: Coalition of Leaky Condo Owners
- www.hpo.bc.ca/: Homeowner Protection Office
- www.choa.bc.ca/: Condominium Home Owners Association of B.C.

If you know of any other relevant and useful sites please let us know. We will add them to our list. And finally, do you have a condo question? Go ahead and ask us. You can find us at www.gotacondoquestion.com/!