

BUYER BEWARE



Make sure your designers or architects have their registration number.

BY BRUCE CROMIE

As of January 1, 2006, the rules changed regarding the submission of drawings and applications for building permits. The change is the result of an amendment to Ontario's Building Code Act, and it will affect everyone who is going to apply for a building permit.

The amendment is known as Bill 124, an Act to Improve Public Safety and to Increase Efficiency in Building Code Enforcement, which the Ontario government passed in June 2002 – with additional amendments to come into effect later. The Act incorporated recommendations made by the government's Building Regulatory Reform Advisory Group.

The Ontario government is requiring that any firm submitting designs of any type to municipalities in connection with a building permit must be registered and obtain a ministry-issued designer registration number.

This number (Building Code Identification Number or BCIN) is issued to firms and individuals after specific conditions are met, including the successful completion of the appropriate ministry examinations based on the Ontario Building Code. The regulation also requires that the designer have special

Errors and Omissions Insurance to cover the design function.

This Act and the recent amendments are for the better. It should speed up the process of obtaining permits and reduce costs to all qualified professional designers and their clients. Until now, they have paid indirectly by waiting far too long for a building permit that should have moved through the system quickly and directly, because the permit fee is based on the amount of time that the examiners spend examining drawings.

This means that if you are working with designers, you should confirm that they are registered – don't assume it. If they are not, then you will not be able to apply for a permit; the application will be turned away at the building desk.

The fact is that some designers may not even be aware of this new legislation. This is more likely with part-timers. They may be out of the loop and in for a revelation next time they go for a permit.

You can learn more by visiting www.obc.mah.gov.on.ca. 🍁

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