MMAH Changes Delivery Model for Ontario Building Code Qualification Exams

By Katherine Rentsch

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing (MMAH) recently announced changes to the way that exams for building code qualifications will be delivered. This comes on the heels of a longer term trend of MMAH to get out of the business of training and testing for Ontario Building Code practitioners.

MMAH introduced mandatory licensing for all septic system installers 1998. To support this initiative MMAH took on the responsibility of the development of training material and the facilitation of the courses and exams. Delivery of training material was outsourced to various authorized delivery agencies across the province, including the Ontario Building Officials Association (OBOA) and the Ontario Rural Wastewater Centre (ORWC). In 2005 MMAH expanded the licensing program to include all building code practitioners for all parts of the building code, including designers and building officials.

Over the last two years, MMAH has been tweaking this model of training and qualification. In 2013, MMAH transferred the responsibility for the development and delivery of training material to George Brown College, and gave permission to all colleges to offer building code courses in an effort to make them more widely available across the province. It should be noted that the province through George Brown College still recognizes third party authorized delivery agencies such as the OBOA and the ORWC.

MMAH has most recently changed the delivery model for the qualification exams. All building code exams will now be facilitated through Humber College, effective November 19, 2014. A legitimate complaint of the examination process under MMAH was that technology, specifically the use of electronic technology for registration and testing was being under-utilized. Humber College has made a concerted effort to bring the examination process into the 21st century both through the exam registration process as well as the exam delivery modes. Exam registrations can now be submitted online or by phone, email or via a paper form. Exams will be offered online or at Humber College test centres which will be available across the province. Long criticised for the delay between writing an exam and getting a result, Humber College promises to communicate an exam result to the practitioner via email within two weeks of writing the exam.

To apply to write an examination you will need a Building Code Identification Number (BCIN). Anyone writing a Building Code examination for the first time will require a BCIN in order to register for an examination with Humber College. This must only be obtained for the first exam – your BCIN will not change for subsequent additional building code qualifications. Subsequent to passing the exam practitioners must still register with MMAH. Registering allows the practitioner to be entered into an online database which allows building officials to search BCIN’s and confirm qualifications. To learn more go to www.humber.ca/buildingcodeexams.

Minor changes have also be made to insurance requirements. Some designers are required to carry insurance during their period of registration with MMAH and the Branch has recently developed a new standardized insurance form to be used when submitting evidence of insurance. This form will be available for use as part of registration applications on November 1, 2014. The use of the new form will be mandatory beginning January 1, 2015. It should also be noted that registration fees for installers and
designers will be increasing to $105 & $165, respectively, effective January 1, 2015, and that all practitioners, including municipal building officials and on-site sewage installers, will be subject to annual registration.