



Building Better

A First Nations National Building Officers Association publication

Volume 5 | Number 2 | Fall 2008

Basic Home Maintenance

Most people don't wake up in the morning excited about doing home maintenance. Like school kids with homework, we know we should do it, but often put it off. In the case of homework, it may result in poorer grades, but in the case of home maintenance, it often results in higher home costs and poorer living conditions.

Through the Basic Home Maintenance workshop, CMHC's Quality Housing Initiative is helping to equip First Nations' people with the tools to take on more responsibility and ownership of their homes.

The capacity of First Nations' communities to manage housing varies widely, however the desire of communities to move ahead is strong. First Nations can see that increasing home maintenance knowledge and skills will improve the health and safety of their communities as a whole. This may require changing attitudes, actions and behavior. Home maintenance is an uphill battle, and seldom are enough maintenance workers or dollars available. The community's attitude and awareness of maintenance issues are extremely important.

Home occupants can be the eyes and ears for maintenance workers, identifying problems while they are still small. Home occupants are also the driving force at the local

government level, where decisions and budgets are made regarding home maintenance.

Typically, First Nations' community needs include: increasing the life-span of housing, cutting down on the frequency of, and need for, major repairs, and making homes healthier and safer for occupants.

Delivered in two-day sessions, the course addresses these needs, with material on understanding the housing policy that defines the responsibilities of the band vs the homeowner, and the cost to the community of neglect, vandalism and deferred maintenance. Props are used to demonstrate maintenance tasks homeowners can do themselves.

In those communities that have delivered the program, calls to the maintenance department have decreased, and it is now

(Continued on page 3)



Wayne Baker of APTN's "Closer to Home" demonstrating eavestrough maintenance



FNNBOA President's Message

192 members and growing!

Despite the challenges of dealing with the transition to new Objective-Based Codes, FNNBOA has been revitalized by the prospect of expanding into uncharted territory. More and more communities are realizing the importance of code enforcement and are initiating the mechanisms that will ensure compliance to standards that fit the community. This was brought about in part by the First Nations Housing Trust Fund. As part of the application process, the trust fund asks the applicant to pause and consider the question:

“Are we doing everything possible to ensure that the houses built in our community will provide a safe, healthy, structurally sound environment that will meet the needs of all who enter, including Elders, the handicapped and future generations?”

While this brings to the forefront the challenges of enforcing the building code with solid, community-driven by-laws, it also raises the prospect of ensuring the FNBO is protected by errors-and-omission insurance. The FNBO must also be supported by a solid technical background of skills training that includes building science, code interpretation, code legislation, new construction materials, best practices and future trends, such as enhanced energy use and preservation of existing housing stock.

FNNBOA has been busy forging alliances with like-minded stakeholders who can provide FNBOs with the necessary training. Along with these alliances, we continue to strengthen our connections with the Ontario Ministry of Housing, the

Safety Codes Council and technical colleges such as Humber, NAIT and Malaspina. We are pleased that FNNBOA is now a Corporate Member of the International Codes Council (ICC).

Watch our website for details on how your community can participate in Building Safety Week in May. This expands on last year's business plan of ensuring access to training mechanisms.

Completed: An on-line training program through Humber College; a Healthy Housing seminar with goals in keeping with Quality Housing Matters, initiated by CMHC; and, a meeting in Edmonton to focus on the long-term objectives of FNNBOA.

Our promotion of the Building Permit Process continues, with presentations delivered in Atlantic Canada, The Housing Symposium in Winnipeg, and the annual TSAG conference in Edmonton. This year, our grandiose goal is to brand the FNBO as the “go-to guy.” Key activities are the website, newsletter and Certification Council. Other projects will be forthcoming based on response from the Edmonton meetings.

This year's AGM was held in conjunction with the Prairies Housing Symposium hosted by Manitoba, and was well attended. Continuing as Vice President, Helen Ward Wakelin has taken on the responsibility of securing corporate sponsorship.

Congratulations Helen!

Bud Jobin
President, FNNBOA

About This Issue ...

The FNNBOA Newsletter is published by the First Nations National Building Officers Association.

~

Contributors

Bud Jobin, John Kiedrowski, and Don Fugler

Editor

Moirra Farr

Production

taybridge.communications

Printing

Anishinabe Printing

Inquiries

*Helen Ward-Wakelin,
Vice-President*

Keith Maracle, Secretary

~

FNNBOA, 5717 Old Hwy #2,
Shannonville, Ontario
K0K 3A0

info@fnnboa.ca

<http://www.fnnboa.ca>

~

Not to be reproduced in any form without the written permission of FNNBOA.

~

Special thanks to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada for their financial support.

~

The views in this newsletter are those of the contributors and may not necessarily represent FNNBOA or the funding partners.



(Continued from page 1)

mandatory that all new home owners take the course before moving into their new homes. Where possible, a house visit is scheduled to ensure participants can routinely assess the condition of house elements, and understand the importance and use of safety devices, such as shut-off valves, smoke alarms, electrical-circuit safety devices, and ventilation equipment. Some communities use door prizes to entice participants, or

provide starter tool-kits to all who attend. Home owners taking the course have responded favorably. Many continue to personalize their surroundings, upgrade fixtures and do their own repairs using the lessons learned.

For information on the Basic Home Maintenance course, contact your regional Senior Advisor for Aboriginal Capacity Development, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Several First Nations Building Officers

provide training in Basic Home Maintenance, as well as all of the QHI training programs under Quality Housing Matters.

<http://cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/ab>



FNNBOA Spreads the Word

FNNBOA has been very busy promoting the association and its members. Below, a list of events FNNBOA has recently attended. We're also having day-to-day meetings and conversations with various government officials and stakeholders. FNNBOA continues to be the lead association providing input into national housing policies that affect First Nations' communities.

- Annual Technical Services Trade Show (TSAG), Wednesday, Nov 5, 2008, Building Permits
- Toward a New Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development – Montreal December 2 and 3, Montréal, Economic Development
- Treaty 7 Tribal Management Corporation (Alberta), December 5, 2008, Building Permits

Trade Shows – 2008

- Women and Youth Entrepreneurship Symposium & Tradeshow (WAYES), April 30 – May 1 at Saskatoon's Prairieland Park
- Alberta Building Officials Fall Conference October 1-3, President's Dinner
- 13th Annual OFNTSC Trade Show, October 8
- First Nations and Inuit Housing Symposium October 21-23, Winnipeg
- Annual Technical Services Trade Show (TSAG), November 5 – Alberta

Presentations – 2008

- Alberta Region Housing Conference (INAC), September – Building Permits
- Atlantic Region NISI Meeting, October 16, Building Permits
- FNNBOA Annual General Meeting, October 22, Presentation to the executive and members on building permits
- First Nations and Inuit Housing Symposium, Octo-

FNNBOA – AGM

The Annual General Meeting was held in Winnipeg on October 22, 2008. Helen Ward-Wakelin was nominated as Vice President. Keith Maracle continues to be Secretary as well as Vice President of Government Relations. Bud Jobin continues to be the President and Acting Executive Director. Vince Geneaux continues to be Treasurer.

There was a presentation for the executive and members on building permit systems. Copies of meeting minutes or any business plans are available at: info@fnnboa.ca.



Eagle's Eye on Ventilation: Practical ventilation systems for new and existing houses

by Don Fugler
Senior Researcher, CMHC

All new housing requires mechanical ventilation. Most existing housing would also benefit from mechanical ventilation, particularly if the house is crowded. This short article talks about mechanical ventilation systems that are efficient and effective.

For new houses, the least costly system to operate is a fully-ducted heat recovery ventilator (HRV). HRVs should exhaust continuously from bathrooms, kitchen, and basement, and supply air to the bedrooms and living areas.

The HRV control should have at least two speeds: the maximum designed flow and a speed that is about half the maximum. An HRV can be turned to medium or low speed in mid-winter when natural ventilation is highest.

Some people are sensitive to the sound of air flowing into a quiet bedroom, so ducts and supply grills should be designed to reduce noise.

This system is the most efficient because all the ventilation air is run through a heat exchanger to recover the outgoing heat, and only the HRV fan is required to move the air around.

Check this site (<http://www.hvi.org>) to select an HRV with good heat recovery and low electrical usage. One advantage of using the HRV for continuous exhaust in the bathrooms is that the cost of installing bathroom fans, ducting, and termination hoods disappears.



Natural ventilation rates are highest in winter because cold outside temperatures cause high stack pressures in the house. The higher the pressures, the more infiltration and exfiltration. It is true that some houses see higher natural ventilation rates in summer if they keep their windows open wide. This changes the house air-leakage area. Natural ventilation rates in summer with windows closed can be very low.

Many builders prefer to use forced-air furnace ducts to distribute air from the ventilation system. This will not match the efficiency of a fully-ducted HRV, but can provide only a small incremental operating cost if you install a furnace with a very high-efficiency circulation fan, one that will operate at less than

100 W at low speed. With the HRV and the efficient low-speed furnace fan operating at the same time, you are still doubling the electrical cost of running the system.

Another alternative is to have the furnace fan cycle 15-20 minutes an hour, instead of running full time whenever the ventilation system is active. This does not distribute the fresh air quite as well as full-time distribution, but it will cost far less to operate.

Here is a site describing furnace-fan cycling controls (<http://www.fancycler.com>).

HRVs need maintenance or they will not operate properly. Either a maintenance person or the homeowner should:

1. Clean the intake screen whenever there is a build-up of leaves or grass.
2. Wash or change the filters every two or three months (a five-minute job).
3. Wash the core and check that the condensate drains are running free every fall (a 20-minute job).

Here is a link to a CMHC document describing how to do these tasks:

<http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/pdf/62043.pdf>

(Continued on page 5)



(Continued from page 4)

If you or your clientele are not diligent with maintenance, you should probably stay away from an HRV system and install an exhaust-fan system instead. These are more expensive to run (as there is no heat recovery) and less effective at good ventilation, but they are hard to screw up. Design to CSA F326, making sure that the exhaust fan that will be the primary ventilation system is quiet and unobtrusive. The use of the exhaust fan has to be electrically linked to the furnace circulation fan, otherwise you cannot ensure that fresh air reaches all rooms. Make sure that it is an efficient furnace fan, or that there is a furnace-fan cycling system. Research shows that people with HRVs appreciate the air quality that these systems provide. Exhaust-only systems may be less expen-

sive, with lower required maintenance, but people tend to use them less. Then they will have inadequate fresh air, and their house and health may suffer.

The situation is usually different for existing houses. Fully-ducted HRVs are still preferable, but ducting, unless there is an open basement, may be too expensive to install. That leaves you with an HRV ducted through the furnace ducting system (if there is a furnace) or a small (e.g. 25 L/s), low-sonic (quiet) bathroom fan with the furnace fan circulating the fresh air. If you are not replacing the existing furnace, and if it does not have an efficient fan, then the furnace cycling controls mentioned above are critical for efficient ventilation usage. Again, electrically linking the ventilation fan switch to the furnace fan will ensure that all rooms

in the house get at least some fresh air.

For both new and existing houses, an exhaust-only ventilation system may cause problems with a wood-stove or chimney-vented space heating system. Check for proper operation with a house depressurization test, and ensure that the house has adequate smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms to alert the residents of dangerous situations.

Many Canadian houses are under-ventilated, through poor design or low usage of ventilation systems. If a house has an effective, quiet ventilation system, people generally use it. Well-ventilated houses have healthier residents, and less deterioration due to moisture damage. It is worth the effort.

FNNBOA Designs Brochure on Building Permits

Unaware of how building permits will benefit your community? Not sure what a building permit is? Your questions are now answered in a brochure designed by FNNBOA.

FNNBOA's brochure is inviting and interesting, so readers can easily review and retain the information. It was first handed out at the Housing Symposium in Winnipeg and received very positive reviews.

With this brochure, FNNBOA wants to get a simple message out to communities: building permits help improve housing conditions.

The brochure will be available at various events and will be part of the FNNBOA media package. It will also be accessible on our website.

On the following page there is a copy of the content of the brochure, with questions on building permit systems. You can download the full brochure here: <http://www.fnnboa.ca/documents/FNNBOABuildingPermitsBrochure.pdf>

Contact FNNBOA for more information!





The Building Permit Process: Building Permits for First Nations

What is a building permit?

A building permit is formal written approval from the band council to construct, add onto, renovate, alter or demolish existing buildings. It means rigorous reviews of plans and specifications for construction to ensure compliance to established standards and land uses. Building permits allow a band council to ensure all buildings meet the terms set out by band by-laws and zoning by-laws, which include the provincial or national building code, and any health and safety regulations that may come into play.

Building permits also ensure quality control in home construction so that funds are not wasted. Money saved can be used to build more homes or renovate others. Building permits help ensure that buildings are safe for occupants. Some communities may use or adopt a form of building permit by granting building permission or consent, or they may exercise building control through an established process that includes plans submission, budget reviews and a quality-assurance regime.

Who will be responsible for building permits?

In most cases, a building department will be responsible for issuing building permits. The department will review applications and building plans. The department will also conduct several inspections to ensure the home is being built to code and housing standards. The building department may also charge a fee for the building permit that will offset the costs of the inspections and raise revenues for the community, making the process self-sustaining.

How do you get building permits in your community?

Your community leaders must want to change the housing conditions in your community. One reason for the poor quality of homes in many communities is that they were not built to any building codes or standards. Once there is support for building permits, the council will need to pass a series of by-laws for building, zoning and land surveying or administration. There are several excellent examples of other communities that have implemented permits.

Why building permits in your community?

Building permits ensure that families are living in a safe and healthy environment. Permits also help to protect families from building homes that are structurally unsound.

Building permits will:

- Ensure that construction, renovation and other projects requiring permits are built right
- Control where homes are built
- Include inspection to make sure they will be safe for the occupants
- Protect housing investment
- Make the builder and homeowner accountable



Fire Prevention in Aboriginal Communities: How to keep your family and home safe

To help reduce fires in Aboriginal communities, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Aboriginal Firefighter Association of Canada have created a manual and DVD: Fire Prevention in Aboriginal Communities.

The Fire Prevention in Aboriginal Communities manual and DVD were created after CMHC's 2004 Canadian Housing Fire Statistics research identified that the rate of fire incidence in First Nations communities is higher (2.4 times) than the per capita rate in the rest of Canada and the death rate from these fires is 10.4 times greater.

The manual aims to help Aboriginal fire departments with their fire prevention programs by providing real life case studies and solutions based on interviews with volunteer firefighters in 10 Aboriginal communities across Canada. Topics range from chimney maintenance, arson prevention and the beginning and growth of a volunteer fire-fighting squad. The DVD provides important fire safety tips for all members of the community.

To help prevent fires in Aboriginal communities and minimize potential fire damage, CMHC recommends that all homes:

- Install smoke detectors and check them regularly to ensure they are working properly.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in a convenient location in your home.
- Plan an escape route in case of fire and rehearse

your plan with family members.

- Ensure you have an easily accessible alternative exit if the first exit is blocked by fire.
- Never leave candles burning unattended and keep candles out of the reach of children.



- Make sure that cigarettes are fully extinguished.
- Clean chimneys once a month during heating season and have chimneys inspected annually.
- Ensure wood stoves are installed properly.
- Keep clothing and other flammable materials away from heating sources, such as space and baseboard heaters.
- Store matches and lighters in a safe place away from children and heat sources.

- Store firewood at least 30 feet from the home.
- Store flammable materials, liquids and solvents in metal containers, and keep them 30 feet away from the home.

For more information or a free electronic copy of the "Fire Prevention for Aboriginal Communities" manual and DVD visit the CMHC Web site at www.cmhc.ca or ask CMHC at 1-800-668-2642.

CMHC is Canada's national housing agency and a source of objective, reliable housing expertise.



FNNBOA Member Profile: Tracy Howse

Tracy Howse has been the housing manager in her community of Conne River, Newfoundland, for over five years.

During this time she has been very active in the housing area at both the regional and national level.

She is currently a board member of the First Nations National Housing Managers Association.



Tracy is also a member of the First Nations National Building Officers Association. She has successfully completed Humber College's 10-week on-line course, Inspecting Existing Dwellings. She hopes to continue with inspections and has recently submitted an application to FNNBOA for her Level One inspector certification.

Tracy's background includes a two-year college diploma in Accounting, Business and Computer Applications. She has also taken several housing courses through the Annokiwin Training Institute. She is currently enrolled in a leadership program through a local college in Newfoundland.

Tracy believes that the day will come when housing on reserve will exceed the quality of housing off reserve. With many dedicated professionals in the field, and support from chiefs, councils and government on all levels, the opportunities are endless.

In her spare time, Tracy enjoys spending time with her husband Tom, and her four children, Dakota, 15, Derek, 12, Jewel, 11, and Madison, who just turned 6. She also has two step-children, Emilyann, 18, and Tommy, 15, and a baby step-granddaughter.

Become a FNNBOA Member

Current Home Mailing Address	
First Name	
Middle Name	
Last Name	
Suffix (e.g. Jr. Sr.)	
E-mail address	
Address	
City or Town	
Province	
Postal Code	
Home Telephone	
Office/Business Mailing Address	
Contact First Name	
Contact Middle Name	
Contact Last Name	
Suffix (e.g. Jr. Sr.)	
E-Mail Address	
Company Name	
Address	
City or Town	
Province	
Postal Code	
Office Telephone	
Office Fax	
Type of Membership	
<input type="checkbox"/> Full (\$100/yr plus a one-time \$50 Initiation Fee):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate (\$250/yr):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate (\$500/yr):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student-Internship and Mentorship (\$50/yr):	
Mail your cheque to:	
First Nations National Building Officers Association Attn: Keith Maracle 5717 Old Hwy #2 P.O. Box 219 Shannonville, Ontario K0K 3A0	