

Manufactured Home Update

Oregon Department of Consumer & Business Services ■ Building Codes Division

October 2000

Board recommends fee increases _____

by Larry Iverson

At the July 20 meeting of the Manufactured Structures and Parks Advisory Board, the board recommended Building Codes Division implement temporary rules to increase fees effective Oct. 1, 2000.

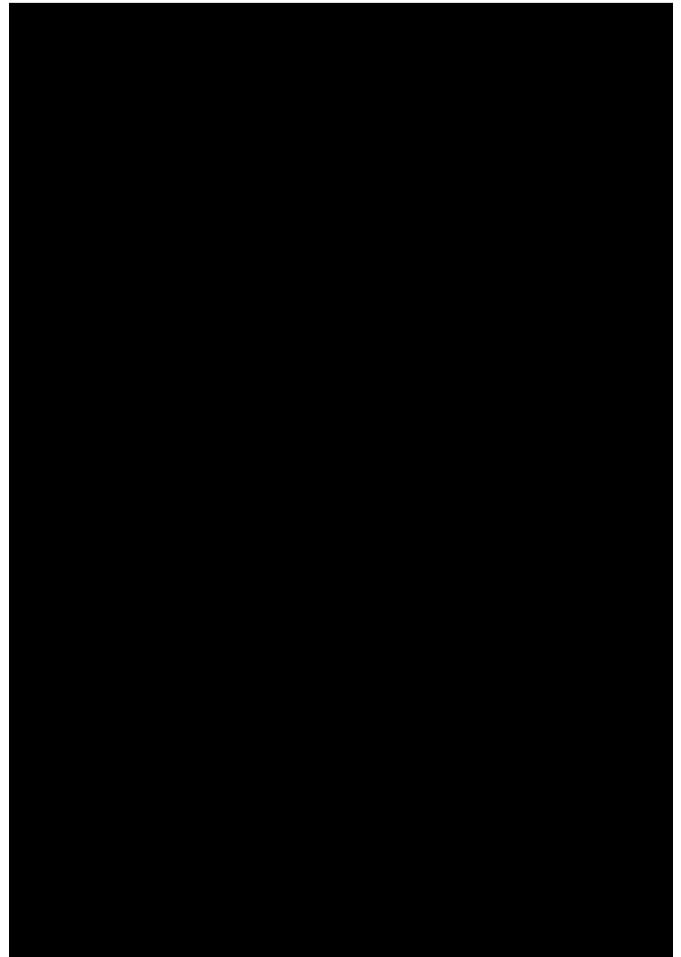
Fee increases are deemed necessary, even after expenditure reductions, to cover the projected costs of maintaining essential services through June 30, 2003.

BCD has already reduced staff and eliminated some program functions in order to control costs and is investigating further cost reductions.

The board approved the proposed temporary rules on the condition that BCD and the board meet prior to the board recommending making the fees permanent by sending the rules forward in the rule-making process for subsequent public hearing and final adoption.

The board directed the division to update its plan by taking into account the latest information about market conditions, expenses, and program-related projections by the January 2001 board meeting.

Fee increases... Continued on page 2



Important information about license renewal for this year

by Albert Endres

This is a reminder that for some of you, licenses will expire at the end of the year. Please check the expiration date on your license, and, if it will expire, circle the date on the calendar by which it must be renewed.

BCD is required to send you a notice 45 days prior to expiration, but we have found that many addresses have changed. The burden of renewal is yours.

Last year, we mistakenly sent notice that you had a grace period in which to renew your license after it

expired. There is no such grace period, and the notice **will not** pertain to licenses that expire this year.

If you do not renew your license prior to expiration, you must attend the required classes and reapply for a license as if you were a new applicant.

If you have questions concerning license renewals, please call Heather Gravelle, (503) 378-3980. ■

Program ends OSU installation monitoring

by Albert Endres

Many of you probably already have heard that our contract with Oregon State University for installation monitoring has not been renewed.

The reason the program was not renewed was simply a matter of economics. Production is down and money for some of our programs is limited.

In addition, installation inspections are one of the programs in our manufactured home section for which other departments receive revenue to ensure proper installation. This is by local inspection agencies through permit fees.

The monitoring process will continue on a limited basis with the BCD's SAA staff. We will continue using retailers as a source of information and also will monitor installers based on our database of ac-

tive installers.

We plan to monitor each reporting installer during the year. The reporting and transferring of information will remain the same. Installers will still be required to respond to the division reports when we find failures to comply.

Because there will be less activity from the monitoring inspectors, it remains very important that each installer and field inspector make every effort to do each job as thoroughly as possible. We are counting on everyone to do what is required to ensure conforming installations.

If you have any questions about the monitoring process, please contact Al Rust, (503) 378-8053. ■

Manufactured home industry will be reviewed

Attorney General Hardy Myers is convening a task force to review the manufactured housing industry in Oregon. Task force members will include representatives from all areas of industry, including consumers, government officials, manufacturers, and dealers.

"It is important that everyone be involved in this process," Myers said. "On one side, there are consumers and consumer advocates who have serious concerns about the current state of the industry. On the other side are industry representatives who justifiably want to make sure that law-abiding companies that put the consumer's interests first are not unfairly burdened as the result of a few bad actors."

The task force will examine all aspects of the industry and develop recommendations to address any problems that it identifies.

The task force's first meeting is scheduled tentatively for Oct. 6 in Hearing Room A in the State Capitol Building in Salem.

For additional information about the task force, please contact Pete Shepherd, special counsel to the attorney general, (503) 378-6002, or send e-mail to pete.shepherd@state.or.us. ■

Fee increases continued from page 1

Examples of the temporary increases:

Fee	From	To
Field inspection	\$45.00	\$55.00
Single visual alteration inspection	\$95.00	\$125.00
Manufactured dwelling inplant inspection	\$32.50	\$42.50
Manufactured dwelling and cabana installation	\$105.00	\$160.00

Complete fee changes are outlined in Administrative Rules OAR 918-500-0100 and OAR 918-500-0150.

For additional information or clarification, please contact Albert Endres, (503) 378-5975, or Larry Iverson, (503) 378-2306. ■

Make sure crews place seal sills properly

by Albert Endres

One of our installers recently provided us with some photos and information concerning the placement of the required sealant between the two sections of a home at the ridgebeam. As you can see from the pictures, the ridgebeam is not a full beam. The installer

placed the seal sill at the upper portion of the assembly. Because the roof cavity vents through the roof, the seal sill is ineffective. Please make sure all of your crew members understand the function of seal sills and that they place them appropriately. ■



The ridgebeam is not a full beam; the installer placed the seal sill at the upper portion of the assembly.



The roof cavity vents through the roof, so the seal is ineffective.

BCD considers sales training

Building Codes Division is considering offering sales training to retailers. No, not the “art of the deal,” but training in codes, zoning, site development, installation, construction, contracts, warranties, service, and policies and procedures as they relate to the overall sales process between clients and retailers. We envision a seminar-style environment, similar to our manufactured dwelling installer and inspector.

Your input is needed. What sales-related training would you like to see offered? Hint: Please refer to the “Retailer Monitoring” handout that each dealer receives twice a year as a good resource for ideas.

If you have any ideas to share, please contact Mark Campion, (503) 378-4530 as soon as possible. It is important that we get your input. ■

Some installers not meeting tag-report requirements _____

by Albert Endres

The Building Codes Division has become more active recently in finding installers who have not met the installation-certificate reporting requirements.

Problems have included failure to report each tag's use in the month in which it was used, failure to report use, an inordinate number of tags reported lost, and other problems.

We have taken action against some violators and will continue to do so for those we identify as violators of the rules.

Please make sure you accurately report each tag used at the end of each month. Fill in the reports completely. If you have any questions concerning the requirements, please call Irene Lickiss, (503) 373-1257. ■

Every installer who has ordered tags must report monthly _____

by Irene Lickiss

Oregon Administrative Rule 918-515-0340(1): "A manufactured dwelling dealer, licensed installer or limited skirting installer who has purchased certification tags directly from the Division shall submit a certification tag report to the Division on the last day of each month and prior to requesting additional certification tags."

That means that every installer who has ordered tags **must report monthly**. The only exception is if no homes were installed during a specific month and no tags were issued, then no report is necessary.

Albert Endres, the lead worker for the SAA Program, has indicated there will be much closer scrutiny of this aspect of the certification tag program. There has been laxness in this area by a few installers who don't do home installations on a regular basis.

All installers received packets containing a copy of the rules when they ordered tags for the first time or when the rules changed (Jan. 1, 1999). Please make sure you comply with these requirements and submit your reports monthly for installations made during the month. ■

Installers: Think about certification-tag use _____

by Albert Endres

Many of our installers run more than one crew, and each crew member is either a fully licensed installer or a temporary installer. Over the years, we have noticed that these multi-crew installers use the certification tag of the owner of the business as long as the owner is licensed. Owners employ licensed crew foremen on the job and the rules don't state crews cannot use owners' tags.

One significant danger to owners is that reports and any discrepancies therein are logged under the owner's license. If a licensed owner gets too many violations on record, his or her license may be suspended or revoked.

You must remember that the license is an individual license, not a business license. If your business is based on you being licensed, you are taking a risk by allowing licensed installers or temporary installers to use your certification tag. Installer errors could cause you to lose your license.

I would encourage you to consider having the foreman of each of your crews be responsible for the purchase and reporting of the installation certificates. That way, you are protected and we will know who is truly accountable for the installation. ■

Board OK's certification tag price increase; new rates effective Oct. 1

by Irene Lickiss

A temporary increase in the cost of the installer certification tags, which was approved by the Manufactured Structures & Parks Board, becomes effective Oct. 1, 2000.

The new price per tag is \$8, which will remain in effect until further review by the Manufactured Structures and Parks Board. When the board meets to consider the tag price, it will either be approved or changed. You will be notified by mail of the board's final decision.

When you place tag orders that will be processed after Oct. 1, please be certain that you are sending the correct amount for the number of tags you want at \$8 each. We cannot fill tag orders completely if you do not send enough money to pay for the tags you request. For example: If you order five tags (after 10/1/00) and send BCD \$25, we will be sending you only three tags (\$25 divided by \$8, which is the new price). We will not be

refunding small amounts unless you request a refund in writing, but will enter the excess amount in your file and apply it to future tag orders.

Unless your tag order envelope is date-stamped by the post office *before* 10/1/00, your tags will be \$8 each. There is still a limit of 30 tags per order, as stated in Oregon Administrative Rule 918-515-0300 (6).

Because there are so many order forms out in the field, we *will not be* printing new order forms until after the board makes its final decision about tag prices. So, please be aware that, even though your order form gives another price, tags are indeed \$8 each as of October 1, 2000.

Please call Irene Lickiss, insignia specialist, (503) 373-1257, if you have questions about certification tag fees. ■

Unmet reporting requirements can result in fees and civil penalties

by Albert Endres

Although we've been emphasizing to everyone the need and requirement for retailers, installers, and manufacturers to respond to Building Code Division reports within 30 days, our efforts have not resulted in much improvement. With recent staff cuts causing increased work loads, we have limited time to spend chasing people for responses.

Oregon Administrative Rules and Oregon Revised Statutes both require that repairs be made within 30 days of the date of the notice that repairs are required and that retailers, installers and manufacturers respond to the division within 30 days of the same notice that the work has been accomplished.

If you are not responsible for repair, you still need to respond to inform us of your position. If you cannot

correct the problem within 30 days, you need to contact the division and request an extension. We need to know.

Most of you do a good job with the repairs and responses. Hats off to you for that. For those who fail to "repair and respond" in the future: Be aware that reinspection fees AND civil penalties may be imposed. We have stepped up our efforts in this course of action for chronic violators or those who fail to respond after a reminder message.

Pay close attention to deadlines to avoid unnecessary work and costs. If you have questions about this, please call Albert Endres, (503) 378-5975. ■

Wet wood, shims, and wedges cause big problems ---

by *Al Rust*

On a recent survey inspection, I noticed that the wood used for the shims and wedging material was not only wet, but also had mold on its surface.

The material had been used on a home installed with masonry block, and the home had been installed only two weeks before my inspection.

I found 25 percent of the piers under the main frame and the centerline of the home had already become loose and were not supporting the home.

This was not the first time that I have encountered this wet-wood issue. When I was visiting a dealer lot on an inspection, I found wet shimming and wedge material in the stock they use for setting homes for customers as well as on the lot.

I know that the demand for and the cost of this material is high, but we must think about what happens

when this material dries out under the home. Within a matter of two weeks, the home I inspected was already failing.

So, if a home's tape and texture is cracking, or the floor squeaks or buckles, you may want to look at the foundation material.

The crawlspace area under the home should be dry and well-ventilated, and the wood used on top of the pier blocks needs to be dry. If it's wet and moldy, it will cause a number of problems related to dry out and shrinkage.

Although this is another issue: In both cases just mentioned, one-inch lumber was used for shimming material. One-inch lumber is not among those materials that can be used for shims on a pier. See OMDS 303(d), Page 18. ■

Division clarifies letter-response requirements ---

by *Tom Nicolai*

Some of the areas the Building Codes Division (BCD) is responsible for include consumer assistance and on-site inspections. After such inspections, we send letters to the dealers, manufacturers, and, occasionally, installers. These letters require a response within a specific time frame. Unfortunately, there are misunderstandings about when the responses are required.

When BCD receives a consumer-assistance request, letters of notification are mailed to both the dealer and manufacturer along with a copy of the request filled out by the homeowner. The letter instructs recipients to investigate the report and respond in writing within the time period specified in the letter. Sometimes manufacturers or dealers don't respond to the letter because the work already has been scheduled for repair or they think that items listed on the report don't apply to them. If, after investigating, manufacturers, dealers or installers think the items listed do not apply to them or that they are not responsible for the repairs, they still should send a letter to BCD stating their findings.

After repair work is completed, some dealers and manufacturers believe their work is done. However, they still need to take the final step of informing BCD in writing that they have completed their involvement in the case. This same series of steps must be taken when a consumer-assistance inspector performs and on-site inspection. We send a letter of notification and a copy of the inspection form to the dealer, manufacturer, and, when necessary, the installer. These parties are required to investigate and respond to BCD in writing within the time frame detailed in the letter of notification.

Rules about responding to BCD notifications are contained in Section 610 of the National Manufactured Housing Construction Act of 1974 and Oregon Administrative Rule 918-500-0420. This applies to manufacturers and dealers (or their agents) and installers.

In any industry, communication plays a vital role. Keeping all parties informed with up-to-date information can help prevent situations in which someone — especially the consumer — doesn't know what's happening. ■

Homeowner registration cards: Get them, use them _____

by Tom Nicolai

Under Federal Standards 3282.211, Record of Purchasers, every manufacturer of manufactured homes shall provide with each home a booklet containing at least three detachable cards with blanks for the name and address of the dealer or seller of the home; the name and address of the person buying the home; the address at which the home will be located if not the same as the address of the purchaser; the date of the sale to the purchaser; the month, day and year the home was manufactured; the identification number of the home; the model of the home and the designation of the zones for which the home is equipped.

The manufacturer is responsible for filling in the blanks on the cards for the month, day and year the home was manufactured, the identification number of the home, the model of the home and the designation of the zones for which the home is equipped. Under Federal Standards 3282.255, the dealer is responsible for filling out the remaining blanks on the card including the dealer's name and address, the name and address of the person buying the home, the address where the home will be located if different from the purchaser and the date of sale to the purchaser. The dealer should then detach the card and drop it in the mail. Each card is already

addressed to the manufacturer and has adequate postage on it.

Almost without exception, the manufacturer knows who the homeowner is through various other internal records, including purchase orders and service records. However, in rare instances, the information card serves as the only record of the homeowner's identity and location. If a serious defect or safety hazard involving the home is discovered, and the dealership is no longer in business, the information card could be the only means for the manufacturer to contact the homeowner.

As part of the SAA program for Building Codes Division, it is my responsibility to ensure the information cards are present while reviewing the files of the manufacturing facilities.

Over the past two years, there has been more emphasis on this issue to ensure compliance with the federal requirement. There has been much improvement during this time, but there is still room for more. All dealerships should review this issue with their sales staffs to ensure that the cards are being filled out during the sale and forwarded to the manufacturer. ■

Winter is coming! _____

by Albert Endres

It's almost time for those in the manufactured home industry to think about winter and what you may need to do differently because of the approaching change in weather.

Each year, we deal with issues having to do with weather as we monitor storage lots and sales centers and deal with consumer complaints.

These weather-related problems can be reduced if everyone makes an effort to address the following:

- Blow the water out of the water lines.
- Add antifreeze to toilet tanks and bowls.
- Pay close attention to factory closeup methods.
- Check homes when they arrive at sales centers or delivery sites for closeup.
- Offer hand tabbing of shingles for high-wind areas.

- Installers: Consider hand tabbing the ridge cap if you're in a windy area.
- Offer storm doors for homes sold in harsh-weather areas.
- Check the storage areas for closed doors and windows and proper closeup.
- Park homes in storage areas with a solid base and good drainage.
- Installers should make sure that homes are protected during installation.
- Check access roads to delivery sites for adequate clearance and support.

Take steps to prevent these items from harming homes. If you think of anything that should be added to the list for next year, please let me know, (503) 378-5975. ■

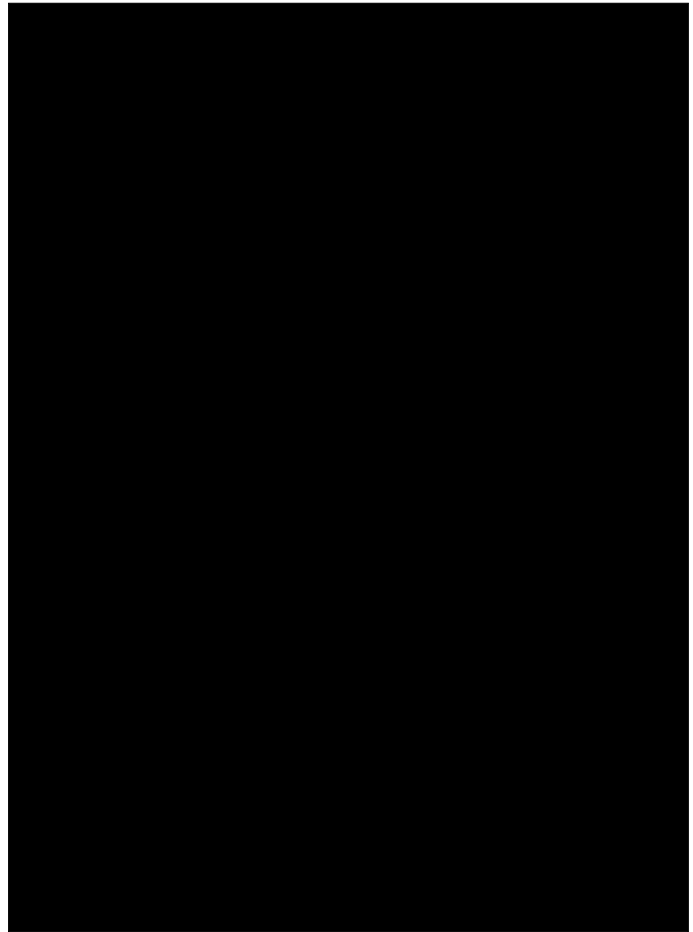
Letters to the editor _____

The *Manufactured Home Update* welcomes letters from dealers, installers, manufacturers, and anyone else with an interest in the manufactured-home industry.

If you have a trouble-shooting tip that you can share with others, if you have some bright ideas that can help others do business better, if you have a comment about fees or statutes, jot down those thoughts and send them in. We'll publish them in these pages, so more members of the industry can benefit.

Names will be omitted upon request; the editor reserves the right to delete names in cases of derogatory or controversial topics.

Letters may be sent to Albert Endres, Building Codes Division, P.O. Box 14470, Salem OR 97309, or faxed to (503) 378-2322. Please label clearly, "Letter to the Editor." E-mail letters to the editor may be sent to Albert.Endres@state.or.us. ■



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