



Manufactured Home Update

Oregon Department of Consumer & Business Services ■ Building Codes Division

October 2004

Building Codes to take over licensing, ownership, and trip permits

By *Albert Endres*

As many of you know by now, Senate Bill 468 transferred dealer licensing, manufactured-structure titling, and manufactured-structure trip permits from the Department of Transportation to the Building Codes Division. This transfer is effective on May 1, 2005.

We need plenty of help to get the word out to all those affected. We have been sending information to lenders, escrow agents, banks, transporters, dealers, park owners, manufacturers, counties, regulators, and government agencies. Please pass the word about the change to those in your industry.

The transfer of these duties will signal the introduction of our new electronic system that will allow nearly everything we do regarding manufactured-structure paperwork to be done electronically. New homes will be entered into the system as they are produced or sold for the first time. Most secondary sales will also be in the system.

Businesses that chose to become electronic system users will be able to record and transact business at the level to which they are involved and approved. The counties will be instrumental in these transactions as well. Other changes:

- Trip permits will still need to be pulled, but this will be able to be done electronically.
- Trip permits no longer need to be posted on homes, and the completion report will be electronic.
- Park owners who buy and sell homes will be licensed under limited licenses that cost less than before.

- Traditional dealerships will be unaffected except that they will be licensed through BCD. Current licenses will be valid until renewal time.
- The division will continue to monitor traditional dealers but will also monitor licensing requirements.
- Developers and contractors who sell more than one home a year will need dealer licenses to do that, and we are asking dealers who sell homes to developers and contractors for resale to help us inform them about this.

We will begin training users on the electronic system starting in January. We anticipate a relatively smooth transition once everyone is trained and aware of the changes. If anyone has questions about the transition, call me at (503) 378-5975 or send e-mail to Albert.G.Endres@state.or.us ■

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Prevent water damage — seal your home

By Tom Nicolai

We've already seen a September preview of the windy, rainy season that is rapidly approaching. Protecting your home from water damage is important. One of the best measures to prevent water damage is to ensure that the exterior is adequately sealed with the correct type or grade of sealant.

In most cases, exteriors of the manufactured homes are sealed at the factory during production. During installation or set-up, areas usually sealed or resealed are the front and rear-entry doors, upper and lower horizontal trim, and various exterior fixtures. When repair or service work is done, resealing the home's exterior should be part of the job.

Probably most important is sealing the home on a regular maintenance schedule, which falls to the owner in the longer run. Retailers should stress to purchasers how important it is that they read their owner's manuals concerning maintenance requirements of their new homes.

Who is responsible for sealing the home?

- During production of the home, the manufacturer is responsible.
- At the time the home is set up, the set-up crew or the dealer who hired the crew is responsible for sealing.

- After the home is set up, it becomes the responsibility of the homeowner to maintain and seal the home on a regular basis.
- Homeowner's manuals recommend that, if the home is set up on the dealer's lot as a display model, it is the dealer's responsibility to maintain the sealing of the home according to the manual until the time of sale.

Consumer-assistance inspectors have seen the type of damage that can occur when the exterior of the home is not sealed properly or the wrong type or grade of sealant is used. In one case, the exterior door was reinstalled after the home was set up. The set-up crew missed sealing a top corner of the entry-door brick mold, where it met the siding. Water entered the wall cavity at this location and traveled to the floor, damaging the wall panels and floor decking. The floor needed extensive repair.

This is just one example of how improper sealing can lead to damage from water penetration. Make sure the sealant you are applying is continuous, covers the area it needs to, and adheres to both surfaces. Also make sure the sealant you use is of high quality and is correct for the application, even if it costs a little more. After all, a little time and money invested now may save you a lot of grief and money later. ■

Correctly installing vapor barriers

By Dwight West

There have been some questions asked about the proper way to install vapor-barrier ground cover under homes that have been set without it.

People who are buying homes that are already placed or who are re-financing their placed manufactured homes are finding that some lenders require ground vapor barrier installed under homes before they will loan any money.

When installing the ground vapor barrier on existing homes to meet the Oregon Manufactured Dwelling and Park Specialty Code, the entire stand must be covered with a continuous 6-mil or 6x polyethylene membrane. All seams must be overlapped by at least

eight inches; any holes, tears, and penetrations must be adequately sealed or patched with permanent tape.

Unless the installer creates a continuous layer by loosening each pier and running the vapor barrier under it, the ground cover will have to be cut out around each pier. If the ground cover is not under each pier, the installer has to use permanent tape on all sides of each to affix the barrier securely to the piers. This must be done in a manner that prevents gaps around the piers. If you have questions about vapor barrier installation under installed manufactured homes, please call me, (503) 378-2620. ■

Inform the buyer

By Tom Nicolai

Purchasing a manufactured home can be an overwhelming and confusing experience for the first-time manufactured home buyer. In fact, with all the changes to manufactured homes in past years, buying a manufactured home can be confusing for *any* buyer. Buyers become lost in the details and decisions of floor plans, interior design, and interior finish. They forget to ask important questions about the home.

That is where dealers or their representatives come in: They are there to represent the dealership, the manufacturer of the home, and the industry as a whole. With buyers more concerned about quality and price than ever, it is important that they supply as much information as possible during the sale.

Sometimes, in the haste to make a sale, salespeople omit information. A common complaint of homeowners is that they get the run-around when trying to get service on their new homes. At the time of sale, a salesperson should tell the buyer which services will be handled by the dealer and which will be the manufacturer's responsibility. This would prevent much buyer frustration. Manufacturer and dealer warranties should explain in detail they cover and how long they last.

It's important that the buyer be told during the sale what to expect from products and what not to expect, what is standard and what is not. If you don't educate buyers, their expectations can end up seeming quite unreasonable. Many of them expect much more for their money than could be delivered. It is critical to bring expectations in line with purchases. Let buyers know that homes commonly settle, causing

cracks to appear in the drywall finish. If you educate buyers about the normal occurrences that they may experience with their homes, they won't panic later, thinking their homes are falling apart.

Site preparation and skirting around the home are very important issues that must be discussed with the homeowner during the sale. First-time buyers often take for granted that the dealer and installer will handle site preparation and skirting, and, too often, the result is not at all what the buyer envisioned.

I recently inspected a newly installed home, and the way the home was installed was the biggest issue. The site had been prepared by a local contractor who dug it out according to the local frost line and poured a full concrete slab. When the home was delivered, installers set the home according to the depth of the site, which resulted in a pit set. Because of the depth of the set, there was no room in the block skirting to install vent blocks, so a ventilation fan was installed.

The homeowner said that these issues had not been discussed with her by the dealer, the installers, or the contractor. She had expected the home to be set higher so there would be side vents in the block and was concerned that, because of the depth to which it had been set, there was the potential for water to seep under the home. Nor did she like the fan running all the time.

Covering these important issues with the buyer at the time of the sale will surely help the transition to home ownership smoother. ■



DEPARTMENT OF
CONSUMER
& BUSINESS
SERVICES

Building Codes Division

1535 Edgewater NE, Salem, Oregon

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 14770

Salem, OR 97309-0404

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Thanks!

By Irene Lickiss

Last month I asked you all to identify a specific dealer store location. Just to let you know, there are about 810 towns in Oregon. Some of those towns are not even on a typical map. Because my job is confined to BCD's Salem office, I was having a hard time knowing where particular dealers are located in relation to where their homes are set. I just want to take this time to say THANK YOU! — You've made my job a little bit easier. ■

Manufactured Home Update is a regular publication of the Building Codes Division of the Oregon Department of Consumer & Business Services.

Editing, design, and production

DCBS Communications



BCD Administrator

Mark Long

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