



ADVISORY BULLETIN

March 2012

(updated March 2016)

Subject:

Existing Building Maintenance

Background:

The issuance of this bulletin stems from numerous incidents that have involved material falling from high rise buildings in Calgary onto sites below, thereby threatening public safety. These incidents have prompted closures of several public thoroughfares and created instances of damage to adjacent structures and public property. Emergency response personnel have been deployed to alleviate immediate hazards and damage. Threats to public safety are pronounced when wind events occur because exterior building system components can fail. Detached materials along with remaining components of previous system failures create public hazards as they remain loosely attached.

One of the primary objectives in the Alberta Building Code is the provision for safety and to limit the probability that, as a result of the design or construction of the building or facility, a person in or adjacent to the building or facility will be exposed to an unacceptable risk of injury due to structural failure. The Alberta Building Code applies to the correction of any unsafe condition in or about any building or property. Unsafe condition is defined as a condition that, in the opinion of the authority having jurisdiction could endanger the life, limb, or health of any person authorized or expected to be on or about the premises. The authority having jurisdiction means a safety codes officer in the building discipline exercising authority in accordance with the Safety Codes Act.

Advisory:

For all buildings, it is incumbent that owners and property managers immediately, if not performed in the recent past, have inspections undertaken relative to the structural adequacy of connections for all exterior building appurtenances and exterior envelope.

All buildings are susceptible to wind event damage. Continual maintenance of exterior envelope or components thereof and programs of preventative maintenance are critical to the performance of a building system. Exterior envelope, signs, towers, and any other exterior building envelope attachment (including roof spaces) must be reviewed by owners and property managers and deemed secure. Any materials that may be dislodged or moved when exposed to wind are to be properly secured or removed to a safer location.

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Deployment of preventative maintenance is critical in alleviating public danger. While investigating an unsafe condition, Safety Codes Officers may request documentation and records of maintenance to be produced by the owner.

Elements for consideration of maintenance and review may include (but not limited to):

- Changes in climatic data design criteria from the original date of construction,
- Mechanisms of deterioration including structural, freeze thaw cycles, contraction and expansion, solar deterioration (ultraviolet).
- Age of the building components
- Building face exposure where neighbouring buildings have been newly constructed
- Wind engineering
- Deterioration of sealants
- Connections of all attachments to a building face
- Structural fatigue
- Vibration (rail transit, parkades, etc.)
- Deflection
- Load bearing capacity of all connections
- Snow and ice accumulation

At the time of reissuance of this Advisory a Building Maintenance Bylaw is being developed. This advisory will be deemed to be replaced by a bylaw that is in force and deals with the issue of existing building maintenance.

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