

July 5, 2017

Furnaces for Construction Heat

As of May 1, 2017 manufacturers of gas fired residential furnaces have included this wording in their furnace manuals:

"Gas furnaces manufactured on or after May 1, 2017 are not permitted to be used in Canada for heating of buildings or structures under construction."

The housing industry hoped that the Heating Refrigeration and Air-conditioning Institute (HRAI) and its manufacturers would work with CHBA National to find a better solution but their position has not changed. Given the vagueness of the wording in the new ban, CHBA National and the Ontario Home Builders' Association pressed for clarification of the exact meaning of the term "construction".

The results of those discussions have led to an understanding that construction will be deemed to have been completed once drywall installation, sanding and priming is finished. Drywall dust has been expressed as the main concern by HRAI so once that stage is complete, furnaces will be eligible for activation to provide finishing heat. HRAI also does not sanction furnaces used as dedicated heaters during construction only.

HRAI elected to first work with the Ontario gas utilities and the Ontario Technical Standards Safety Authority (TSSA) to provide a model protocol for activation of furnaces to discuss with other provinces. The result of these discussions in Ontario was a "Finishing Heat Activation Form". This form was shared with regulators from across Canada at the CSA Interprovincial Gas Advisory Council meeting in June which was attended by Alberta's Provincial Plumbing and Gas Administrator.

CHBA – Alberta met with the Alberta Provincial Plumbing and Gas Administrator in May to make the case that the new ban by furnace manufacturers is a warranty issue and should not be a safety codes issue. The Provincial Administrator disagreed and has interpreted the ban as potentially enforceable under the Gas Code in Alberta. He has also committed to work with industry on a start-up protocol that will work for Alberta.

Throughout July and August, CHBA – Alberta will work with members, the Sheet Metal Contractors Association of Alberta, safety codes officers and the province to prepare a process and document that will work for the industry and safety codes officers across Alberta. The goal is to have the process and documentation in place for the fall heating season.

CHBA – Alberta will continue to express its disappointment to the government that this has been deemed a safety codes issue.

For more information contact:

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