BUILDING OR RENOVATING A COTTAGE



CottageFirst Insurance

Cottages are no small undertaking! Whether you are a long-time owner planning on a renovation or rebuild, or buying a parcel of land to build your cottage from the ground up, a lot of thought and planning goes into construction work. While you are planning the work on your cottage, take a moment to consider some of the implications of the construction. The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations and their insurance partner, Cade Associates Insurance Brokers Limited, have provided the following tips for you to review before the work begins.

INSURANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

Building New or Renovating a Cottage

When constructing or renovating a cottage, insurance is an important piece of the puzzle that requires attention **before the work begins** to ensure your construction investment is properly insured. Designing a new cottage, or renovating an existing structure involves many different aspects of construction. You may be considering custom designed plans or a pre-designed package, but, regardless of which approach you choose, it is essential that you contact your insurance broker or agent **before starting your project** for guidance on the implications to your own insurance coverage. Many home and cottage insurance providers remove or significantly limit coverage on a dwelling that is under renovation or major construction. Specific insurance products are designed to fill the gap.

Builder's Risk Insurance - New Builds and Renovations

A Builder's Risk insurance policy insures the value of the completed construction project, offering coverage for insured property loss to your structure during a new build or significant renovation. This policy also insures building materials located on site that will be used in the construction, and may include coverage for soft costs such as architectural designs and permits. As the cottage owner, it makes good sense that you own the Builder's Risk insurance policy. Then, in the event of a claim, you work together with the Insurer to settle your loss. However, certain General Contractors may also offer to arrange this on your behalf as part of their contract with you. This insurance must be arranged before construction begins. Depending on the scope of renovation, it may be possible to request an extension of your existing cottage insurance policy during the course of construction. You should be sure to discuss both options with your insurance broker or agent to determine which coverage is the best and most cost-effective solution for your particular construction project.

Personal Liability While Building or Renovating

A construction project brings with it additional personal liability exposures to the property owner. Liability claims may arise from injuries or property damage to others allegedly resulting from your construction project. Be sure to speak with your insurance broker to ensure your existing personal liability coverage is extended to your construction site.

General Contractors

While there is excitement and a personal challenge in building or renovating your cottage, the value of a qualified, experienced General Contractor should be seriously considered. The expertise of a qualified general contractor is valuable and brings better accessibility and pricing with respect to Builder's Risk insurance. Some policies will be unable to extend coverage without an insured General Contractor.

Proof of Commercial General Liability Insurance - It is important that the contract you sign with the General Contractor contains a clause that requires the General Contractor to provide you with a Certificate of Insurance, providing evidence of their Commercial General Liability insurance coverage.

Additional Insured Status - As Owner of the project and property, your name should be shown as "Additional Insured" on the General Contractor's insurance policy. This request is typically satisfied at no additional cost to the General Contractor and is shown directly on the Certificate of Insurance.

WSIB - The General Contractor should provide a Clearance Certificate confirming they are registered with WSIB. This insurance, if in place, prevents them from suing you for their own injuries sustained while on your construction site. It is recommended that you visit www.wsib.on.ca to learn what is required of your General Contractor.

HEALTHY WATERFRONTS

Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

New to cottage country? We encourage you to join your local lake Association to support their efforts to keep the waterfront great. FOCA has more than 500 member Associations all across Ontario that represent over 50,000 waterfront families. To find your local association, and to learn more about FOCA's work, visit www.foca.on.ca. Our mission is to protect thriving and sustainable waterfronts across Ontario. That means vibrant and safe waterfront communities, and healthy environments for the next generations. Stay in-the-know: join 10,000 subscribers who receive free FOCA Elerts, your best source for monthly email updates on cottage country environmental concerns, taxation info and more. See recent editions at www.foca.on.ca/news/elerts, and sign up today!

Shoreline Construction Projects

Building a dock or boathouse along your waterfront can impact important shoreline habitat by covering fish spawning areas, removing rocks and logs that provide shelter, causing erosion from bank disturbance, removing vegetation and even introducing toxic substances if improper building materials are used.
There are ways to limit disturbances to shoreline areas when construction projects are taking place. Avoid work during fish spawning times. Check whether you need a permit for shoreline work, including dock and boathouse construction, aquatic weed removal and beach creation. If your property fronts onto the Trent Severn Waterway or Rideau Canal, you will need to contact Parks Canada about any shoreline projects.

Septic Systems

Most of Ontario's waterfront property owners rely on on-site wastewater treatment systems to manage household water. Maintaining your septic system is critical to ensuring that your wastewater does not add excess nutrients to your lake or contaminate groundwater. Some tips:

- Have your septic tank inspected and pumped out on a regular basis. The frequency will vary based on your tank, family size and number of appliances. Pumping every 2-3 years is a good rule.
- Avoid constructing patios, decks, or parking areas over your septic tile bed. Extra weight can crush pipes and compact the soil, limiting its permeability.
- Install an effluent filter in your septic tank to reduce the amount of solids entering the leaching bed to prevent clogging.
- Ensure continued ease of access to the septic tank for maintenance and servicing.
- Avoid planting certain types of trees around the leaching bed area. Willow roots can clog pipes and shade the septic area, slowing evaporation.
- Direct rainwater from roofs, patios and driveways away from the leaching bed to avoid system overload.
- Do not dump toxic wastes down your drain or toilet. Paints, oil, gasoline, antifreeze and other materials used during construction should be disposed of at your local hazardous waste centre.
- Avoid installing in-sink garbage disposal units.
- Consider installing a composting toilet to reduce wastewater.

Contact your local building inspector for more information. For resources, visit: www.foca.on.ca/septic-systems.

Maintaining Shorelines & Buffer Zones

The shoreline of your waterfront property is called a 'ribbon of life' because it is where 90% of all lake and river life is born, raised and fed. Plants at the water's edge help filter nutrients and prevent erosion. Underwater logs and rock piles allow for fish to rest, feed and spawn while providing protection from predators. In these ways, healthy shorelines help to protect valuable recreational resources and are part of a healthy lake ecosystem. Unfortunately, not every shoreline demonstrates these features.

A naturalized shoreline is generally considered the best multi-purpose approach to protecting the lake's edge. Maintaining or planting a buffer zone of native vegetation along your shoreline will slow erosion, provide food and shelter for fish and wildlife species and protect your property and investment. Best of all, naturalized shorelines mean less work and more time to enjoy the lake!

Buffer zones between the waterfront and the rest of your property can protect shorelines and reduce erosion. Some tips:

- Replanting areas that lack trees and shrubs can help protect the natural shoreline.
- Leave a buffer zone of native vegetation around all shoreline areas. The buffer can be as little as 3 meters wide or larger.
- Don't mow right to the waterfront. A pathway can be maintained for access to the water, but keep any development at least 30 metres away from the shoreline.

FOCA - Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

FOCA's mission is to protect thriving and sustainable waterfronts across Ontario. Today, FOCA has more than 500 member Associations across Ontario representing 50,000 waterfront families. Environmental information above is an excerpt from the FOCA Healthy Waterfronts guide. For resources like this and more, visit www.foca.on.ca.

Cade Associates Insurance Brokers Limited

Cade Associates is proud to be FOCA's insurance partner, providing exclusive group insurance programs to FOCA members. Most of Ontario's Cottage and Road Associations are insured under FOCA's Association Liability and Property Insurance program, and individual cottage owners are switching their personal insurance policies to CottageFirst, taking advantage of the new comprehensive, cost-effective group insurance program with FOCA. For more information on these two programs visit cadeinsurance.com/foca and cottagefirst.com.

ontariocottagers.ca **705-749-3622**
/ontariocottagers **info@foca.on.ca**

cadeinsurance.com **1-844-223-3178 (CADE 1ST)**
/cadeinsurance **clientservices@cadeinsurance.com**