



MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS
ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

WEBSITE mca-ab.com
TOLL FREE 1 800 251-0620

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Industry update – Underslab insulation in Alberta

As a direct result of the joint efforts by **MCA Alberta**, **CIPH**, the **Canadian Hydronics Council**, and **NRCAN, Alberta MLA Dr. Bob Turner** has issued the following statement on behalf of Alberta Municipal Affairs:

“In the interests of maximizing energy efficiency by way of insulation, a requirement was developed in the National Building Code for houses and small buildings that requires additional insulation below the concrete slab of any new home that has radiant heating installed in the slab. This equates to over 4" of Styrofoam insulation having to be installed under the slab and footings and creates both a practical and financial barrier for the installation of radiant heating. Yet if the house is using forced air heating, no insulation is required. The need for this insulation when radiant heating is installed is not supported to meet objectives for energy efficiency.

This is an unintended consequence that was not foreseen at the time of drafting of the code by the national code committees and energy experts. MA Code Administrators have received information provided through performance modeling to support the position of the Hydronic industry related to the more appropriate requirements for underfloor insulation. MA has been monitoring the issue, as it was hoped that industry would be able to resolve the problem with an industry made solution. In consultation with the National Research Council (NRC), the Manager of the Codes Centre at NRC acknowledges there is an unintended consequence that is unnecessarily harmful to the hydronic heating industry and that the national code needs an urgent review.

As a solution is now supported by NRC, the Provincial Building Administrator and Provincial Plumbing/Gas Administrator for these codes will develop an urgent STANDATA Interpretation that will allow radiant heating to be installed without this insulation requirement throughout the Province of Alberta. A proposed code change will also be made by PSD to NRC for changes to the national building code, which the Manager of the Codes Centre at NRC supports. As chair of the Provincial Territorial Policy Advisory Committee on Codes, Alberta will also present the issue to the other provinces and territories, and the proposed code solution.”

Dr. Bob Turner, MLA Edmonton-Whitemud

“While it has taken some time to get to this point and there are still some executional steps to be taken, the Council is very pleased that our collaborative efforts have yielded a fair result for the hydronics industry.” **Dave Hughes, Chair, Canadian Hydronics Council**

Russ Evans
Executive Director
Mechanical Contractors Association of Alberta