

VISUAL FIRE ALARMS

The Comox Valley Regional District board, on occasion, elects to support province-wide concerns and issues in the form of a board resolution. These resolutions are normally forwarded first to the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities (AVICC) for consideration but may also be forwarded directly to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). Based on the nature of the concern, UBCM will either endorse or not endorse the recommendation and if endorsed, will present the concern to the provincial or federal government on behalf of all BC municipalities and regional district.

Date of Board meeting: April 22, 2008

Board Resolution: WHEREAS hearing impaired people may not be able to respond to audio fire alarm systems;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Provincial Government require visual alarm systems be installed in all places where audio alarm systems are currently required;
AND FURTHER THAT this resolution be forwarded to the Union of BC Municipalities 2008 Convention.

This resolution was referred to UBCM on, June 27, 2008

A response was received on May 6, 2009

Response from UBCM: On motion, was ENDORSED at annual convention: The Resolutions Committee advises that UBCM membership has not previously considered a resolution requesting that visual alarm systems be installed where audio alarms systems are required.
The Committee would point out that the Coroner in reviewing a hotel fire that took place in Richmond recommended the installation of visual fire alarms in public facilities to assist persons with hearing disabilities

Additionally this resolution was referred to the Ministry of Housing and Social Development The British Columbia Building Code (BCBC) establishes minimum requirements for the installation of fire alarm systems in B.C., including the areas of a building where persons with hearing impairments are to be visually notified of a fire alarm.
Buildings or portions of a building, used primarily by persons with a hearing impairment, are required by the BCBC to be equipped with visual signal devices.
If the installation of a visual signal device is to be required in addition to and in all places where audible signal devices are currently required, changes to the BCBC would be needed.
The BCBC is adopted from the National Building Code of Canada (NBC). This is an issue of national interest and not regional specificity. Therefore, consideration of this issue should be through the NBC code change process.