

New requirements for building owners

Do you own an apartment building, health care facility, retirement home or car park ? Since March 18, 2013, you must meet new standards and requirements concerning the operation, maintenance and inspection of your building.

What buildings are subject to the new rules?

- ◆ Apartment buildings or condominium buildings with more than two floors and more than eight units
- ◆ Private retirement homes and health care facilities, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, residential care facilities, etc.
- ◆ Sleeping accommodations or meeting venues that hold 10 or more people, including rooming houses, hotels, motels, daycares, restaurants, theatres, schools, etc.
- ◆ Certain car parks, above-ground or underground
- ◆ Commercial properties larger than 300 m²
- ◆ Office buildings with three or more storeys
- ◆ Buildings equipped with water cooling towers
- ◆ Certain temporary structures, including grandstands, patios, tents, inflatable structures, etc.

To find out if your building is subject to the new requirements, please visit the site of the [Régie du bâtiment du Québec](#).

What are the new rules?

The *Regulation to improve building safety*, found in the "Building" section of the *Safety Code*, was devised to improve fire safety and reduce the number of accidents in various types of buildings.

To learn more on this topic or for more information concerning your insurance or risk management needs, please contact your portfolio manager at Vézina. We'll examine your situation and make informed recommendations to protect what matters most to you: the future of your business!

For example, here are some requirements of the new regulation:

- ◆ The building must meet the standards applicable in the year of construction or conversion.
- ◆ You must meet the requirements of the *National Fire Code*, which include regular maintenance of sprinklers and alarm systems, building evacuation procedures and an annual fire drill.
- ◆ In certain buildings, you must implement additional fire protection measures, such as a fire alarm detection system, emergency lighting and fire separations.
- ◆ For buildings with more than five floors, you need a report every five years from an engineer or architect stating that the façade is not in hazardous condition.
- ◆ For car parks, an engineer must provide an initial in-depth audit report. After that, you must conduct an annual audit and fill out a detailed form.
- ◆ For water cooling towers, you must implement a maintenance program to prevent legionella contamination.

What are the penalties?

Under the *Building Act*, any breach of your obligations under the law is subject to a fine of \$5,290 to \$26,450 for an individual, or \$15,871 to \$79,351 for a company. For repeat offences, the fine may be nearly double these amounts.