



GLP INFO ONLY - PEO will continue Regulatory discussions to ensure provincial safety regulations relating to engineering are enhanced

**GLP Notes 8.0– Falling Balcony Glass
June 2013**

Background

Several instances of glass falling from balconies in Toronto during the summer of 2011 were the subject of major media attention and public concern about safety.

In January 2012, an Expert Panel was convened by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to conduct a review and provide advice on building code requirements for glass balcony guards. The panel comprised 25 people from various sectors, including consulting engineers, architects, manufacturers, builders, building officials and standards agencies. Of these 25, 11 were professional engineers. Three of these were design engineers from consulting engineering firms that specialize in the design of building facades.

The final report of the Expert Panel was received by MMAH on March 30 2012. The report contained a number of recommendations that the ministry introduced as changes to the Ontario Building Code (OBC) on June 12, 2012.

The design engineers on the expert panel did not agree with the recommendations. PEO agrees with the design engineers that since they bear the responsibility for inadequate design, their views on the required standard of care should be the deciding factor on the acceptability of recommendations. However, MMAH chose to adopt the recommendations acceptable to the majority of the panel, many of whom would have no legal or professional responsibility for any future failures.

PEO supports the position taken by the design engineers that the minimum level of protection provided by the changes to the OBC is not what the public expects of designs prepared by professional engineers

PEO's support of the design engineers does not relate to kind of glass that should be specified in the OBC, as this is not a PEO matter. The issue for PEO is a broader one about the need for the OBC to reflect the reasonable standard of care expected of professional engineers working in areas covered by the code.

This is a long term project and is not ready for GLP action. PEO will continue to conduct regulatory discussions to ensure provincial safety regulations relating to engineering are enhanced.

Key Points

- The public was concerned about glass falling from balconies and buildings.
- An Expert Panel was convened, and its recommendations were accepted by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and filed as regulations amending the Ontario Building Code (OBC).
- PEO's support of the design engineers on the Expert Panel, who did not agree with all of the recommendations, does not relate to the kind of glass that should be specified in the OBC, as this is not a PEO matter.
- PEO's issue is the need for the OBC to reflect the reasonable standard of care expected of professional engineers working in areas covered by the code.
- PEO will continue regulatory discussions to ensure provincial safety regulations relating to engineering are enhanced.
- **No GLP action required.**