

To All OIRCA Members:

COVID-19 & Roofing in Ontario

On April 3, 2020 the Ontario government updated their list of essential business that may stay open during the COVID-19 crisis. By 12:59 p.m. Saturday April 4, 2020 businesses that were not identified on the list must close their physical locations. Not surprising was a decision to restrict the majority of construction operations around the province.

This link will take you to the government's webpage that details the essential list:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/list-essential-workplaces>

Articles 27 through 31 are very specific about which types of construction projects that are deemed essential. The list is clear and really doesn't require any clarification.

Article 20 addresses "maintenance" and states:

Maintenance, repair and property management services strictly necessary to manage and maintain the safety, security, sanitation and essential operation of institutional, commercial, industrial and residential properties and buildings.

This particular article is important to the roofing industry as it allows roofing contractors to perform service work and maintenance work. It also states that property management services may be permitted under specific circumstances.

How re-roofing fits into this equation is a gray area. In many instances OIRCA would certainly classify re-roofing as strictly necessary (i.e. essential) maintenance and repair work and in that case one could assume that those types of projects may continue. Of course, if a roof leaks, on any building, an argument could be made that for safety and sanitation reasons the roof should be replaced. Mould, corrosion and electrical problems are common byproducts of a leaky roof and pose a health and safety risk.

Members that are contemplating re-roofing operations are advised to contact the building owner, their design authority (roofing consultant, engineer or architect) and general contractor if there is one to discuss the necessity of re-roofing their facility. Members should obtain a letter from the owner, their designer and if applicable the prime contractor stating that it is essential that the roof be repaired and re-roofed.

On a case-by-case basis the parties must assess how essential it is to “start and complete” the work. When it is determined that maintenance work or construction activities as detailed in clauses 27 through 31 are permitted, employers should issue written letters to all workers providing details regarding the jobsite, hours of operations and the work being performed so that they can demonstrate to government enforcement officers that they are authorized to travel to the project to perform the roofing work.

Of course, any such work must follow the guidelines released by the MOL utilizing proper COVID-19 job site procedures. Here is a link to those best practices:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/construction-site-health-and-safety-during-covid-19>

As you can appreciate, we are experiencing a very dynamic situation here and it may take some time to work out the specifics of this type of work moving forward. Events change daily and we caution members to do their due diligence before moving ahead with any such project.

Good luck stay safe and healthy.
