

NEWS LETTER • NEWS LETTER • NEWS LETTER • NEWS LETTER •

NEWS IN BRIEF

SAVA

The SAVA - "Alliance Cornhill Hidden Effects Scheme" has been discontinued from 30 November 2004. Sava-accredited surveyors can no longer offer the scheme to clients directly unless they are FSA registered for sale of general insurance.

Building Regulations, Part P (after 1st January 2005)

Electric wiring becomes included within the scope of Building Regulations for the first time, with a requirement that all "fixed electrical installations in dwellings will be suitably designed, installed, inspected and tested to as to provide reasonable protection against their being the source of a fire or a cause of injury to persons".

With only few exceptions, electrical work after 1st January 2005 must be installed or certified by a "competent person". Surveyors should be alert to any evidence of unapproved alterations carried out by householders, kitchen and bathroom fitters and the like, or otherwise be liable to claims of negligence.

Building Regulations, Part E (after 1st July 2004)

Sound-proofing between dwellings in new buildings or conversions. Has it been tested or does it benefit from the Plot Registration Scheme operated by Robust Details Limited? For more information click on www.robustdetails.com

Why do chipboard floors squeak?

Particle board (chipboard) expands as its moisture content increases. A floor 3 metres wide can expand 7mm when its moisture content increases from 9% to 16%. A chipboard floor is susceptible to squeaking unless it is securely fixed but designed to accommodate expansion.

CHECK:

Expansion joints: An expansion joint of 10mm is required around the perimeter of the room (or 2mm per metre width across the floor).

Support: 18mm boards are only suitable to span joists up to 450mm centres apart; 22mm boards up to 600mm apart.

Glue: All joints must be glued.

Moisture: Water resisting boards must be used in kitchens and bathrooms and other damp locations.

Pipes and conduits: Central heating pipes and services need adequate clearance and protection to avoid problems of noisy contact.

INDEPENDENT SURVEYORS ASSOCIATION

New Members

Welcome to new members:

Peter McDermott
Peter McDermott Surveying Associates Ltd, Macclesfield

John Wheatley
John Wheatley Associates, Nottingham

David R. Crooks and Malcolm Williams
Harrison Lavers & Potbury Ltd, Sidmouth

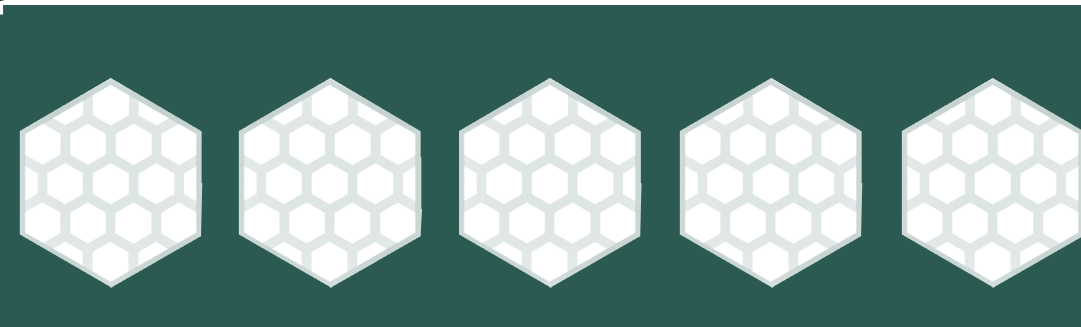
Alan Baker and Stephen Dean
Dean Baker Smith, Croydon

Arthur Bletchly
bValued Ltd, Cardiff

...and finally..... POINTS TO PONDER!

The mediocre are always at their best
Sterility is hereditary
Monogamy leaves a lot to be desired
Women were born without a sense of humour so that they can love men and not laugh at them.

This edition of NETWORK ISA has been published with sponsorship from:



NETWORK ISA



Derek Took welcomes Steve Dixon of Towergate Finch to ISA's second mini-seminar on PII held at the Hove Club on 1st December.

MINIMISING RISK AND MAXIMISING PROFIT

ISA Progress 2004:

WHAT HAVE WE DONE FOR YOU?

The PI Initiative: Introduced at AGM 2004, the dedicated scheme for ISA members is proceeding well and has already provided significant savings on PI insurance costs for many members. Call Steve Dixon (Towergate Finch: 0161 831 3222 - ISA's honorary insurance broker) for a quotation.

Networking: Two local networking groups are 'up and running' - success will depend on members supporting meetings. Why not obtain our assistance in 2005 to set up a group in your area?

Promotional Leaflets: Now available via ISA Administrative Office, for members to promote business and to encourage use of independent surveyors.

Home Inspection Diploma: Representing interests of the small independent practice on the ABBE committee monitoring the award.

Brooke Review Committee: Two ISA Council members have represented interests of small practices on the committee.

Regular Newsletter on topical issues.

Conferences: Two major conferences and a series of mini-seminars have been organised this year.

Carsberg Review: Providing a detailed response to Sir Bryan Carsberg in relation to the consultative document published in 2004 (Enclosed).

Continual monitoring of all issues relevant to small independent surveying practices.

Complaints Handling procedures: Advising various members on complaints handling and operating an RICS-compliant system. Offering a dedicated scheme for mediation.

Promoting ISA to the general public and operating a 'customer' help-line.

Dedicated free-phone number for use of the general public in locating an independent surveyor.

ISA dedicated website - receives 3500 hits per month and should be regarded as a marketing tool.

Promotional offers only available to ISA members: concessionary purchase of RICS 'Red Book'; benefits of TRADA membership etc.

Newsletter

EDITORIAL



“Come all ye faithful”

Be in no doubt – whether you are in favour or not – as 2004 draws to a close, the new career of Home Inspector starts to take shape driven by the Housing Act which has just received Royal Assent.

The career is open to any individual from any background who must first obtain the ‘Home Inspector Diploma’ – the key qualification for this type of work – and secondly, must become licensed.

A number of professional organisations are already approved as assessment centres for the diploma, including RICS, SAVAs, Association of Building Engineers, Chartered Institute of Building and others, all of which require to have been accredited by ABBE – the **Awarding Body for the Built Environment**.

Routes of entry vary from ‘ab initio’ to part qualification, gained from previous experience (the ‘fast-track’ route), but entrants, without exception, are required to sit an on-line examination and to submit ten survey reports, of which three are in the Home Condition Report (HCR) format.

So what about cost? ABE and CIOB members are offered registration for the diploma at £1600 + VAT (£1850 plus VAT for non-members). RICS also proposes £1600 + VAT for Chartered Surveyors who are experienced in domestic survey work. Those persons who are not members of RICS, but who successfully obtain a diploma in Home Inspection, are promised a fast-track route to membership of the Institution!

Whatever your views, it remains to be seen whether Chartered Surveyors who decide to gear their businesses primarily to producing HCRs, either with or without estate agency, will retain membership of RICS or migrate to another professional body with a more beneficial membership cost, or indeed, will disaffiliate altogether.

The costs of obtaining HI qualifications initially, annual updating by way of CPD and proving currency, as well as licensing fees, which have yet to be set but may be substantial, give cause for making savings in other areas – one of the first victims may be RICS itself, if other organisations such as SAVAs, ABE or CIOB prove to be a more relevant home to the specific skills required and offer competitive terms.

There are of course other merits of RICS membership insofar as ‘showing the brand’ has previously been proof of a surveyor’s qualification and has assisted in obtaining PII cover to enable a practitioner to operate. – Many traditional surveyors only acknowledge membership as a ‘certificate to practise’. However, it is clear that the Home Inspection Diploma and the process of compulsory licensing will itself provide proof of qualifications to an underwriter – if so, the Institution may lose members. RICS has always been at pains to explain that it is a ‘professional’ rather than a ‘trade’ association, but such an elitist approach may prove to be ill-conceived in the future.

Richard Hulls

BOOK REVIEW



Professional Conduct for Chartered Surveyors - a practical guide
by Geoffrey Williams, QC, published by RICS Books, price £27.45.

Why is it necessary for an eminent QC to write a book explaining professional conduct? Perhaps the answer is obvious. Drafting of Rules, Regulations and By-Laws by RICS has become increasingly more complex. Some parts are not written in good plain English and therefore can only lead to confusion. Perhaps a lesson can be learnt by those who write the Rules and Regulations; perhaps a long hard look at the whole of the RICS By-Laws would also be a useful task.

David Hamilton, ISA’s Director of Professional Standards, gives this review.

Geoffrey Williams’ book provides a guide to members which is well written and explains some of the unknown factors that occasionally trouble surveyors’ lives.

The useful chapter on ‘Lifelong Learning’ (CPD) explains the necessity of planning learning objectives and retaining details for at least three years. The best advice is to keep records close at hand so that they are immediately available if demanded. If RICS request proof, provide this as soon as possible and not at the end of the time period that you have been allowed. This will give a clear impression of co-operation and having nothing to hide.

Chapter 3 is the most important section and covers disciplinary structures and procedures. Whilst it sets out an outline of how matters progress, there are areas which are left unclear. For example a Professional Conduct Panel (PCP) is constituted with a minimum of 5 members but there is no indication of the maximum number or how a Hearing proceeds.

On the other hand the Disciplinary Board has a maximum of 5 people, including a lay member, and a Legal Assessor.

A PCP may examine the personal file and the personal financial affairs of the member. The book does not comment on data protection although one might expect such information to be kept confidential. Any member can apply to the

RICS for a copy of their personal file under data protection. Obtaining this information might be essential in cases where a member is facing disciplinary procedure to ensure that whatever is on the file is correct, particularly when mistakes are not unknown.

In more serious cases where a member is summoned to appear before a Disciplinary Board, there are specified time periods in which a member, and the Institution, must give discovery.

The By-Laws allow the Chief Executive to carry out investigations in the case of a first offender and power to review penalties awarded by an Appeal Board. The By-Law was previously approved by the members but the question of whether a single member of the RICS executive should have the power to challenge a decision made by consensus of the member’s peers remains unanswered.

Other chapters address keeping of accounts, the relationship with clients and professional indemnity insurance.

The book is well worth reading and essential for any member who catches the attention of the Institution. The book is available through RICS Books at a cost of £27.45.

David Hamilton