

BIG NEWS

BCARC to merge into the larger B.C. Construction Safety Alliance!

In a move designed to preserve an important safety function for the industry, the BC Association of Restoration Contractors (BCARC) has announced plans to merge with the BC Construction Safety Alliance (BCCSA).

Established in 2005, the BCARC's mandate is to provide workplace safety training programs and support materials to the industry. Up until recently, it had been doing just that very successfully, with the association's efforts responsible a major contributor to ongoing improvements in the industry's base rate levy.

But delivering H&S services has always been a challenge for the dedicated but small organization, which operates with a low level of WorkSafeBC funding and just one staff member: the Executive Director. Those factors, combined with the pending retirement of the ED, meant it was time to consider other options to ensure survival of BC ARC's important safety programs. After consulting with WorkSafeBC, a working group was formed and began discussions with BCCSA, which welcomed the idea of a merger.

"After ten years of steady progress our Board of Directors felt it was time to explore the merits of merging our small effort with the much larger BCCSA, which will give us access to the resources, expertise, and staff necessary to maintain continuity of safety training for the restoration contracting industry," says Executive Director John Preston, who notes that a key achievement was development of pre-work protocols aimed at raising awareness of and mitigating risks associated with various hazards. The restoration business involves going into all types and ages of existing structures, which means workers often come in contact with highly dangerous substances such as asbestos and lead, sewage-contaminated water from flooded basements, mold, blood pathogens at crime scenes, and the like. "The proposed merger allows the industry to retain all the benefits of the good works achieved to date while opening up a much clearer path for future gains on matters relating to workplace health and safety," says Preston.

BCARC Chair Mike Sully also sees the merger as a very beneficial change in direction that will raise awareness and visibility of the organization's safety efforts. "It will provide access to technical expertise and resources far beyond anything we could possibly have justified or developed on our own and at a much lower cost to the industry constituents," says Sully, adding that BCARC had reached a performance plateau that was considered too difficult to move beyond, given the lack of resources. "John's retirement created both a dilemma and an opportunity," Sully said. "We could either try to find an equally capable candidate to take the reins – no easy task — or we could look at a total organizational rethink and partner with an existing organization. Being a partner in health and safety is what we are about and we could not have done better than to merge with a like-minded organization that is also a safety partner with WorkSafeBC."

If BCCSA provides the resources and infrastructure necessary to maintain and expand safety services for the restoration industry, the Alliance will also gain from the merger, says Chair Domenico Piluso. "Members of the BC ARC will be able to access and utilize safety programs in a more efficient manner and as we add the restoration sector to our current stable of programs, we will also broaden the scope of training available to all of the construction sectors we currently serve," he said. "This will be a good thing all around." Outside of a natural learning curve to get up to speed on particular issues the restoration sector faces, Piluso is expecting a smooth transition.

Although details and timelines for the merger are still being finalized, discussions are centering on the following proposal: creation of a restoration contractor safety program and trade advisory committee within BCCSA, and providing the sector with a seat on the Board so that restoration contractors have a voice at the governance level. Regardless of the final outcome, says BCCSA Executive Director Mike McKenna, everyone is working towards the same goal: "Bringing this hard working group under the BCCSA roof will allow the industry to continue to address its unique safety challenges."

Injury Rate Reduces by half

Injury Rate Reduces by half since BCARC has been in operation". BCARC members should take credit for a much improving safety performance in their workplaces over the past several years. The very favourable trend continues into 2015 for the restoration contractor industry.

[Read the article \(PDF\)](#)

WORKING ALONE

It is not uncommon for our workers to be on the jobsite alone. See the new pamphlet on the topic of "Working Alone" which gives the company and worker some items to consider when this situation arises.

[Download – Working Alone Pamphlet \(PDF\)](#)