

BCJ WEB NEWS

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This mail service is intended to provide the latest information concerning building regulation and our activities to domestic and overseas organizations which are engaged in technical assessments and research in the building field. If you no longer wish to receive this mail, please contact us at the following address:

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§ 1. Recent BSL-related developments in Japan

a) Amendments to the Building Standard Law (BSL) and the *Kenchikushi* Law

As mentioned in the previous issue, a scandal involving the falsifying of structural calculation documents by a first class *kenchikushi* (qualified architect) came to light last October in Japan, and it was discovered that more than 100 structural calculation results which were non-compliant with the BSL seismic criteria had been falsified. The problem was primarily two-fold: it was possible for the *kenchikushi* to falsify engineering calculations, and the building officials or the designated confirmation and inspection bodies concerned failed to identify the defective calculations. In order to prevent any recurrence of such incidents and to ensure regulatory compliance, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport (MLIT) reviewed and revised the building confirmation and inspection system and the related legislation, including the BSL and the *Kenchikushi* Law in June, 2006.

As a result of these amendments, every new building over a certain height is now required to undergo a review of the structural calculations performed by an assessment body designated by the relevant prefectural governor, in addition to the conventional confirmation procedure. Penalties for violations by *Kenchikushi* have also been increased. MLIT continues the discussion on these issues for further review of the *kenchikushi* qualification and other related systems, and will introduce indemnification and insurance

b) Creation of the Basic Law for Housing

In June, 2006 Housing Construction Planning Act was repealed and the Basic Law for Housing was introduced for the purpose of achieving a higher living standard in Japan.

With the number of housing stock reaching a satisfactory level and the changes of social background due to decreasing birthrates and longer life expectancy, this new Law

represents a turn in the national housing policy. The Law aims to establish a safety net for housing and to develop a healthy housing market, moving from supplying a target number of units to improving the quality of housing.

The Basic Law for Housing includes general principles, the responsibilities of national and local governments, basic measures and the development of Master Plans for Housing. Based on this law, a national ten-year Master Plan for Housing will be prepared by the government. Prefectures are then to develop their own plans in accordance with that Master Plan.

§ 2. Recent Activities of BCJ

a) The Activities of BTRI

The Building Technology Research Institute of the BCJ (BTRI) provides research services for the government of Japan, regional and municipal governments, and the private sector, as well as conducts independent studies on topics of its own choosing. During the past fiscal year the Institute has been engaged in a number of projects related to asbestos as outlined below.

Last year, cases with grave health consequences due to the inhalation of asbestos, were made public and became a major social issue in Japan. Asbestos was used in construction as fire-resistant coverings or insulation materials, as well as for manufacturing panels, with its use peaking in the 1970's. The application of asbestos since then has been restricted in stages, due to hazardous health concerns, reaching general prohibition in 2004. The government takes the situation seriously and revised the Air Pollution Control Act and the BSL in February, 2006. The removal of asbestos is to be mandatory when building additions or rebuilding over a certain size is carried out, based on the BSL enforcement order. A measure to block asbestos filaments from scattering in demolition work will be required even for simple structures. With this background, BCJ has been engaged in the following:

- i. *Revision of the Guidelines to Asbestos Fiber Blockage and Removal Technology for Sprayed Asbestos in Existing Buildings*
This BCJ publication of 1992 was reviewed and revised in order to reflect the amendments made to the BSL as mentioned above. It is slated for publication in October, 2006.
- ii. *Creation of the Asbestos Q&A Manual*
At the request of MLIT, a manual (Q and A) has been developed in order to facilitate prompt and accurate responses to inquiries from building users and residents.
- iii. *Study of indoor asbestos concentration indicators*
This was a contract with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Because no methodologies were available to measure asbestos fiber counts or concentrations in a low concentration environment, such as inside a building, BTRI used different measuring methods to collect measurement data, resulting in the proposal of an effective method. Asbestos measurements were also

taken on a number of building materials containing different levels of asbestos, both indoors and outdoors, in order to produce the basic data for the development of concentration indicators.

b) Meeting with NCM

BCJ and The National Center for Construction, Urban Development and Public Utilities of Mongolia (NCM) held a meeting, at the request of NCM, in Tokyo on August 1-2, 2006 to exchange information on activities of each organization as well as on the legal and evaluation systems related to their activities. These two organizations signed a Memorandum of Discussion in which they agreed to continue exchanging information and to make joint efforts in terms of common interest.



Dr.Habu,BCJ(left) and Dr.Ganzorig,NCM(right), signed a Memorandum

§ 3. Schedule of international conferences/meeting BCJ will attend/hold

Dates	Name	Location
September 16 - 23	ICC* ¹ Annual Conference (* ¹ International Code Council)	U.S.A. (Orlando)
October 23-25	The 2 nd Japan-China Meeting on Building and Housing Technology	China (Kunshan)
November 1-3	The 11 th WFTAO* ² Meeting (* ² World Federation of Technical Assessment Organizations)	U.S.A. (Pasadena)
November 15-17	The 19 th Japan-France (BCJ-CSTB* ³) Building Colloquium (* ³ Centre Scientific et Technique du Batiment)	Japan (Tokyo)

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