



Your Independent Rating Bureau

**WASHINGTON SURVEYING &
RATING BUREAU
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER 2010**

The WSRB newsletter is a compilation of information about the rating bureau and other pertinent insurance topics.

To access a story click the link below.

To return to this page, click "[Back to the Top](#)" at the end of each story

- [WSRB — Aggressively delivering more NOW!](#)
- [What's New at WSRB?](#)
- [You Told Us — We Listened](#)
- [From the Washington Department of Insurance](#)
- [Rule 85 Revision](#)
- [NFPA, Sprinkler Systems & Antifreeze](#)
- [Questions for WSRB](#)
- [Need CE Credits — And More Knowledge?](#)
- [WSRB Congratulates Our Own Erica Brownell](#)
- [WSRB Contact Information](#)

WWW.WSRB.COM



WSRB — Aggressively delivering more NOW!

A message from Brian Upton-Rowley, President & CEO



This demand is on my desk and the desk of every employee at WSRB. It is our business plan and our promise to you. We know that your business is not getting easier and that your customers are demanding more of you. So we believe we have an obligation to you — our customers — to deliver more to you now. Aggressively!

What does that mean in terms of action? Here is some of what we have done this year:

- **Protection Plus** — a sophisticated mapping tool that not only gives you the most accurate Protection Class results in Washington but also contains everything from location demographics to catastrophe exposures data! **Protection Plus** is also regional. It contains earthquake, soil types and vegetation density information in Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Utah and California. This application is available to all subscribers. Agents can subscribe to this service for a low price through BMI. Contact us to learn more and for a quote.
- **Risk Analysis Portal** — Another tool using the world class mapping software available through WSRB. Instead of one risk, **Risk Analysis Portal** will plot thousands of locations with up to 10 risk characteristics. It has tools that will allow you to plot an entire book of business, prospects, catastrophe claimants or any other need. It is also a desktop application available to all subscribers.
- **Property Facts** — **WSRB** has moved its field surveyors completely into the mobile digital age. We're using computer tablets with wireless connections to our servers while evaluating a building or grading an automatic sprinkler system.
- **Commercial Property Report** — The **Property Facts** system will now create a new **Commercial Property Report**. (See the next story, [What is New at WSRB!](#))
- **Class Rate rule revision** — We have increased our building square foot size line for specific and class rated properties from 5,000 square feet to the national level of 25,000 square feet. Effective October 1, 2010 — for those Subscribers accepting the change — eligible buildings are considered **Class Rated** up to 25,000 square feet. This will simplify and speed up quoting and placement of small commercial properties.



These represent the beginning, not the goal. **WSRB** is committed to providing relevant, accurate and timely information to all our customers. Our developing applications are opening new doors daily to wider and better information to allow you to price and place commercial risks.

[Back to the Top](#)



What is new at WSRB?



New Property Report: WSRB is now producing a revised Commercial Property Report (CPR). As we survey buildings for automatic sprinklers or specific loss costs, the format and content of our report changes. WSRB will now break out the various components of a building into easy to read and find sections. The automatic sprinkler report does away with the long narrative and replaces it with a concise breakdown of the system from risers to design.

You can now see the design, maintenance, adequacy and deficiencies of the system at a glance.

Our new CPR has the photos and diagrams imbedded in the body instead of as attachments. More photographs have been added so you can see the risk, the adjacent exposures and other important risk aspects. As you receive these, let us know what you think! As always, automatic sprinkler and specific loss cost reports are available at no cost to subscribers and agents (through BuildingMetrix.com) writing business for subscribing carriers!

These new style reports will appear for buildings inspected after August 1, 2010. All buildings will eventually be updated to the new style as they are reinspected.

2010 Business Owner Policy CE Class: WSRB has filed and received approval for two Continuing Education credits for a course on the 2010 BOP with comparison to the CPP. If you need some help in this area contact Tracy.Skinner@WSRB.com.

Protection Plus: WSRB has introduced a new product — Protection Plus. It gives you desktop access to protection classes, soil information, liquefaction information, vegetation density, earthquake fault lines and much, much more. Protection Plus utilizes the best available mapping technology and enables you to look at your risk at the exact parcel (Washington) location. It tells you what soil is under the risk, how stable it will be in an earthquake, what the topography is around it, adds flood zone information and satellite imagery links.

Protection Plus brings together the information you need to understand your risk.

Protection Plus is available to agents through BMI for each of an agency's offices. Our low price gives unlimited access to all agency employees. Oh — and Protection Plus is not just limited to Washington. It contains valuable mapping and other information for Oregon, Montana, Idaho, Utah and California. Give us a call for pricing for your agency!

WSRB — Small enough to know you, big enough to serve you!

Compliance Services: WSRB and BMI now offer Compliance Services nationwide. We can help you with property and casualty form and filing review and make those filings for you. Our compliance department can help with filing preparation or help with routine compliance tasks so your people can concentrate on that big project.

Need more information? Erica.Brownell@WSRB.com will be happy to help you out!



Protection Classes: WSRB PROTECTION no longer returns “split” protection classes when there is no hydrant known to be within 1000 feet of a risk. With the changes in reporting split protection classes, some consumers have found their homeowner premiums have increased because they were rated based on having fire hydrant coverage.

While WSRB has over 90% of all hydrants in Washington plotted, 90% is not 100%! If we missed a hydrant close to the home of one of your customers, please let us know! We will correct it immediately. Our policy is to accept the report and change PROTECTION to reflect the hydrant. During the course of the year, we will drive by and confirm the location and distance. If the hydrant is not within 1000 feet of the risk or we cannot locate it, we will change PROTECTION to show that.

So, let us know where the hydrant is and help your customer keep their lower homeowner rates! If you need more information please contact Customer Service at 206-217-0101. They will want to know the risk address AND where the hydrant is.

Rating Questions: WSRB will help with those tough rating questions. Log onto www.WSRB.com and look for “Ask WSRB” or contact Terry.Krueger@wsrb.com. We will research your question and show you how to handle that odd situation. Terry can also set up some basic commercial property rating for your staff. Learn how to “pencil rate” commercial property risk!

Training: Need help in your office with the new online WSRB/BMI tools or web pages? Training on automatic sprinklers, kitchen suppression systems or other items? WSRB can help with an array of CE Classes or we can simply drop by your office (Insurance Company or Agency!) and work with your staff. Whether it’s in the class room or one-on-one, we are here to help you help your customers!

Contact Tracy.Skinner@WSRB.com or call 206-273-7146.

[Back to the Top](#)

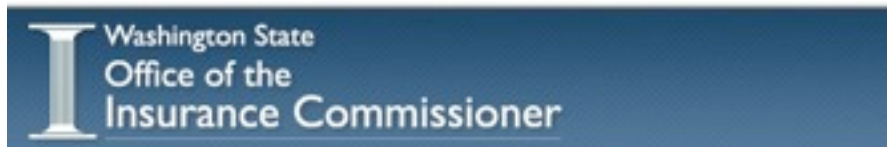


You Told Us — We Listened

You told us. We listened. Be on the lookout for a NEW Building Metrix web site coming very soon. We are streamlining the way agents get to the critical WSRB rating and protection information you need. We think you'll like this new, improved way of logging in and getting your work done.



[Back to the Top](#)



From the
Washington
Department
of Insurance

The Washington Office of Insurance Commissioner has announced plans to proceed with rulemaking on the issue of rating rules that are used to promote rate stability when a company overhauls its rating system or acquires a book of business.

These rules are sometimes called premium-capping rules or transition rules. The rulemaking announcement ("preproposal") can be found at http://www.insurance.wa.gov/laws_regs/rules_pending.shtml. Anyone who is interested in commenting may obtain an informal exposure draft from Jim Tompkins at JimT@oic.wa.gov.

You can also learn more about the preproposal by clicking the links below:

<http://www.wsrb.com/Departments/pdf/Compliance/WAR2010-12PCRateStability.pdf>

<http://www.wsrb.com/Departments/pdf/Compliance/WARateStabilityInformalExposureDraft1.pdf>

[Back to the Top](#)

WWW.WSRB.COM



Rule 85 Revision

Get ready. On October 1 2010, WSRB is revising the Basic Group I class rating eligibility criteria under Rule 85. As a result of the Rule 85 revisions, we will also revise Rule 84: Oil Distributing Stations Class Rates (Class Codes 1751 and 1752) and the Terrorism Pricing — Federal Backstop Rule in the Terrorism Supplement under Division Five — Fire and Allied Lines Manual.



Transition Rule: In order to minimize the impact of loss cost swings, a two-year transition rule is implemented. That limits changes in rates for individual insureds due to these changes in class rating eligibility. The transition rule is applicable to renewals and provides annual caps of +25% to -20%.

The following changes are highlighted, but not limited to:

- Class rating eligibility is extended to additional occupancies, subject to criteria for size and construction applicable to class of risk.
 - Light manufacturing (i.e. textile mill products, baking on premises, delivery to outlets, distilleries and wineries)
 - Dry cleaners and dyeing plants
 - Laundries
 - Tire recapping and vulcanizing
 - Waste and reclaimed materials including yards
 - Building supply yards, including retail lumberyards, coal and coke yards
 - Mill yards
 - Hotels
 - Limited cooking facilities (i.e. motels and hotels with limited cooking restaurant; gambling casinos with limited cooking restaurants; mercantile — sole occupancy only — restaurants with limited cooking)
- Class rating is extended to all construction-types for non-habitational properties up to 5,000 square feet.
- The maximum size limitation for non-habitational properties of frame, joisted masonry or non-combustible construction is increasing from 5,000 square feet to 25,000 square feet.
- The maximum height limitation is eliminated.
- Motels without restaurants will be class rated for all constructions if the total floor area is 5,000 square feet or less; and up to 25,000 feet for frame, joisted masonry or non-combustible construction.
- The Commercial Fire and Allied Lines line of business Classification Table is withdrawn from the multi-line Classification Table and introduced as a monoline

Classification Table as a separate section under Division Five of the CLM.

- Classification and rating applicable to other lines of business or irrelevant to fire are omitted.
- Closely allied classifications have been consolidated.

If help or training is needed on the new rule, let us know and we can help!

**Tracy.Skinner@wsrb.com
or 206-273-7146**

We are providing class loss costs associated with the expansion and necessary revisions of class rating eligibility. The revised class loss costs have been developed so the aggregate loss cost level is unchanged.

[Back to the Top](#)

WSRB OFFERS
a separate suite of services that are applicable to all lines of insurance, not just property – and to all states, not just Washington State. We understand Products offered in the marketplace must meet not only Federal and State guidelines but must be developed, marketed, and retained in compliance with such guidelines. Whether one time or more, large or small – contact WSRB for your Compliance Solutions today. Available Solutions include:

- Pre-review Filing Services
- Standard SERFF and Manual Filings Services
- Post Quality Assurance Filing Services
- Data Warehousing
- Document and Records Retention Programs
- Bureau Compliance Monitoring
- Product Training

**We Are Your
Independent
Rating Bureau**





NFPA, Sprinkler Systems & Antifreeze

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is worried about the use of antifreeze in residential fire sprinkler systems. A safety alert has been issued and those using antifreeze are urged to drain their systems and replace the antifreeze with water.

James Shannon — president of the NFPA — said research from a set of fire tests conducted after a fire incident raised concerns about using antifreeze solutions. The study involved a grease fire in a kitchen where a sprinkler with a high concentration of antifreeze deployed. That fire resulted in a single fatality and serious injury to another person.

Shannon says more research is needed. “Fire sprinklers are one of the most effective ways to save lives and property from fire. Until we can provide further information based on additional research that is currently underway, we are urging the public to continue the use of sprinklers but to follow our interim safety guidelines by removing antifreeze if it is in their sprinkler systems.”

The worry is the chemical make-up of the antifreeze solutions. Shannon’s report said:

“Based on testing conducted, 70/30% glycerin and 60/40% propylene glycol antifreeze may provide an unacceptable risk of harm to occupants in certain types of fire scenarios, in particular kitchen grease fires. There were successful tests where kitchen grease fires were extinguished or contained with a 50/50% glycerin solution but it was felt there should be additional testing to more fully understand if there is a risk associated with 50/50% glycerin solution.”

Here is what the NFPA is recommending in the interim and this information should be shared with your clients:

- If you have — or are responsible for — a residential occupancy with a fire sprinkler system, contact a sprinkler contractor to check and see if there is antifreeze in the system.
- If there is antifreeze in the system, as an interim measure, drain the system and replace it with water only. Problems associated with freezing of sprinkler pipes can be mitigated by alternative measures such as insulation.

We are urging the public to continue the use of sprinklers but to follow the NFPA interim safety guidelines by removing antifreeze if it is in their sprinkler systems.

- NFPA hopes to provide further guidance based on additional testing before the winter freezing months.
- If you are putting in a new residential sprinkler system, design and install a system that does not require antifreeze.

“We are providing this safety alert as interim guidance based on the information we have right now. As soon as more information is available, we will update the public,” Shannon said.

The NFPA continues to worry about kitchen fires and the alert adds some basic info on safety measures consumers need to take regarding them.

- Have and maintain smoke alarms in your home.
- Pay attention when you are cooking.
- Should you have a grease fire on your stovetop, smother the fire by sliding a lid over the pan and turn off the stovetop. Leave the pan covered until the pan cools completely.
- Never put water on a grease fire or use a multipurpose fire extinguisher onto a pan fire, as it can spray or shoot burning grease around the kitchen, actually spreading the fire.
- Never attempt to carry a flaming pan across the kitchen.

And — of course — the NFPA encourages everyone to have sprinkler systems in their homes. “Having fire sprinkler systems in the home reduces the chance for fire fatalities by 83%.”

The NFPA Safety Alert Regarding Antifreeze in Residential Sprinklers and more information on this topic can be found at www.nfpa.org/antifreeze.

Article based on copy from the NFPA. Copyright ©2010 National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, MA

[Back to the Top](#)

Questions for WSRB?

Don't waste valuable hours trying to puzzle something out. Contact us and ask Your Independent Rating Bureau — WSRB. The only thing more important than a question is its answer. Have a rating question? Click [here](#) to access our new form and **ASK WSRB**. We also keep an archive of past questions and our answers to those questions on our [Rating Help Q&A page](#).



[Back to the Top](#)



Need CE Credits — And More Knowledge?

WSRB offers a variety of continuing education classes and a variety of ways for you to get that CE. You can come to us — or **better** — we can come to you.



Here are some of the classes we offer:

Construction Types — 1 Hour

This class covers the six basic commercial construction types. It gives you basic information on burn rates, what one, two or more hour protection means and construction issues when related to fire.

Automatic Sprinkler Systems — 1 Hour

This course goes over the operation of an automatic sprinkler system from sprinkler head to riser valve. It also includes discussion of fast response system, deluge coverage and stack limits.

Hood and Vent Systems UL 300-Restaurant Fire Suppression — 1 Hour

Many underwriters require UL 300 systems in order to write a restaurant. What are they and how do they work? These questions are covered as well as how to recognize the system when in place. The course also covers Hood and Vent systems.

Paint booths and Dust collection — 1 Hour

Paint booths and wood shop dust collection systems are part of many different manufacturing risks. You will get a good understanding of what the requirements are and what these systems should include to provide a safe work area and reduce the risk of fire.

[Back to the Top](#)

**WSRB — Small enough to
know you,
big enough to serve you!**



WSRB Congratulates Our Own Erica Brownell

The staff of WSRB is involved with you and with many insurance associations. One example is WSRB Director of Compliance Erica Brownell. She is deeply involved in the Association of Insurance Compliance Professionals (AICP).

Erica was recently elected as the association's Northwest Regional Director.

Congratulations Erica and a job well done from the staff, management and board of directors of the WSRB!

[Back to the Top](#)

WSRB Contact Information

To become a subscriber or schedule training, please click [here](#) to contact Tracy Skinner, Manager, Subscriber Services

For rating training click [here](#) to contact Terry Krueger, Subscriber Services Administrator

**For Compliance Director Erica Brownell
Click [here](#).**

For Public Protection Class at Risk, log into our Members section, choose PROTECTION on the dropdown menu under public protection.

[Back to the Top](#)

