


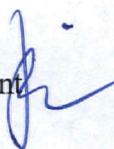



# Staff Report

## City of Manhattan Beach

**TO:** Honorable Mayor Montgomery and Members of the City Council

**THROUGH:** Geoff Dolan, City Manager 

**FROM:** Richard Thompson, Director of Community Development   
Carol Jacobson, Building Official 

**DATE:** June 17, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of Status of Residential Construction Officer Program.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council Receive and File this report.

### FISCAL IMPLICATION:

The building permit surcharge of 10% offsets the costs of this position. During this fiscal year to date, these surcharges amount to \$71,000.

### BACKGROUND:

The City Council discussed residential construction issues as a 2005-2006 Work Plan item and directed staff to hire a full-time officer position to develop and implement a program to address construction issues, which included:

1. Neighbor notification of proposed projects and street or lane closures
2. Required pre-construction meeting and on-site meeting with builders
3. Temporary power pole placement before demolition
4. "Green mesh" around job site fencing
5. Separate enclosed trash container for food and beverage waste
6. Routine site visits by the construction officer

City Council also adopted an ordinance to prohibit construction on three additional holidays. They are: Veterans' Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The City of Manhattan Beach currently enforces "no construction" by contractors for nine specific holidays and every Sunday.

The construction hours that are allowed are: Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**DISCUSSION:**

*Residential Construction Officer:*

The Residential Construction Officer (RCO) Rick Larson issues citations and provides enforcement of the construction rules. Mr. Larson has become a liaison between the residents, builders, and appropriate departments and agencies. His duties include proactive meetings with builders before any work begins as well as a job site meeting with the builder and neighbors after the permit is issued. The City requires new residential and commercial projects, major remodels, and potential high impact project (regardless of size) to comply with the new procedures. The components of the RCO program are described below.

*(1) Neighbor notification*

Neighbor notification includes a postcard system. Last year, over 1,700 postcards were mailed to neighboring residents. These are bright orange cards that specify the type of project and contact information as well as the date for the neighbor meeting. The RCO also visits each neighbor and provides a door hanger with contact information for the builder and the RCO, parking permit restrictions, as well as construction hours. Rick Larson has distributed almost 1,500 door hangars in the last year. The construction hours and contact information are posted at the job site via a standard City sign after the building permit is issued.

*(2) Temporary power, Green mesh fencing, and Food trash cans with lids*

These requirements are discussed at the pre-construction meetings, enforced during inspections – such as pre-demolition inspections, job site meetings, and drive-by inspections. Temporary power is now required instead of generators and must be installed before building construction. The mesh is sometimes an issue because of inflexibility during wind gusts or for corner lot vision clearance. The RCO directs builders to adjust the green mesh, as needed.

*(3) Pre-construction and on-site meetings*

The content of the pre-construction meetings in the office includes information about site run-off containment, food waste receptacles, properly securing the job site with “green mesh” fencing, neighbor notification, review of construction activity hours, placement of the temporary power pole before any work starts, and discussing possible parking issues. In the last year, Rick Larson conducted 122 meetings with builders in city hall before permit issuance. Additionally, the RCO provides information regarding truck delivery routes for vehicles over three tons.

The on-site meetings, after the permit is issued, provide face-to-face neighbor and builder contact to resolve their concerns and to ensure the follow-up of the items previously discussed. Over 120 meetings were conducted during the fiscal year 2007-2008. The RCO conducts the meeting and asks the builder to bring business cards and plans. This is an opportunity for residents to see what will be constructed and how construction may affect common property line walls, parking, building height, trees, elevations, street and alley access, and construction schedule. Most importantly, contact information is exchanged and the neighbors can begin direct dialog with the builder about possible impacts. The RCO encourages the builder to obtain an e-mail list and phone numbers of the neighbors to promote communication. Rick Larson has persuaded some contractors to develop a neighbor e-mail/contact list and keep the residents informed regarding work schedule, traffic patterns and impacts, types of equipment to be used, possible upcoming noise or vibration issues, and project status.

*(4) Tree care and preservation*

New requirements and handouts are also included in the responsibilities of the RCO. Mr. Larson educates contractors, developers, residents, and homeowners regarding the City's tree preservation program before construction begins. Handouts for the construction community now include tree fencing, tree injury during construction, tree pruning and topping, watering and maintenance. Rick Larson discusses with the owners and builders the site conditions, tree preservation and tree permitting in the office and at the on-site meeting. He continuously monitors trees at the construction sites for health, maintenance, and protection.

Value-Added RCO actions:

Rick Larson has implemented procedures to enhance the initial program that was developed by the former part-time Residential Construction Officer Dennis Thorn. Some of those actions were discussed above including encouraging e-mail/contact lists and notifications between builders and neighbors, educating builders regarding tree preservation and maintenance, and inclusion of smaller construction projects that may potentially have significant impacts on neighbors. Below are some additional actions and value-added processes that the RCO provides.

- Developed alternate methods for parking by working closely with Finance Department, Public Works Department, Traffic, Police Department and Parking Control. This includes:
  - Use of the El Porto parking lot through a pre-payment system
  - Utilization of the Valley-Ardmore parking strip
  - Encouraging carpooling
  - Early concrete pours of garage floors for on-site construction parking
  - Creating temporary and limited construction parking loading zones to have minimum impact on neighbors (residential or commercial)
- Works closely with Police Department and Parking Control to monitor use of construction parking permits and pro-active resolution of specific "hot spot" construction area parking issues, such as blocking lanes or access to neighboring garages
- Promotes and builds relationships with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) to monitor air quality issues and provide educational materials and information to contractors regarding retention of materials or methods that cause air-borne dust and debris, such as demolition, sandblasting, and saw-cutting tiles.
- Carefully reviews and monitors private construction impacts around school sites to encourage appropriate parking and traffic control, especially during drop-off and pick up times at the school.
- Facilitates dispute resolution of civil matters by working closely with Dispute Resolution Service, neighbors and builders.
- Responds to and helps coordinate citizen requests for action. Last year, the RCO helped resolve 250 requests for action regarding commercial and residential construction concerns as well as over 600 requests for information. He follows up on about 5 construction impact requests from residents on a weekly basis.

**CONCLUSION:**

Staff, builders, and residents have recognized the benefit of this very successful program. It has significantly reduced construction complaints to staff and council members. Residents, builders, and co-workers have recognized Rick Larson as both Employee of the Quarter and Employee of the

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Year. He has cultivated a professional and friendly working relationship with residents, builders, subcontractors, and staff. As different needs and issues arise from residents and builders, we continue to adjust the Residential Construction Officer program to accommodate those needs. The City looks forward to continuing to improve this program to assist our construction community.


**Attachments:** A. Sample postcard and door knob hanger

cc: Jon and Catherine Strauss  
Jane Schonberger  
Lance Widman, Dispute Resolution Service

# Residential Construction Officer DOOR HANGER

FRONT

BACK



Date \_\_\_\_\_

Hi,

I was in the neighborhood checking on some of the construction projects.

One of the construction projects near you is:  
\_\_\_\_\_

The Builder is: \_\_\_\_\_

The Builder's office phone number is:  
\_\_\_\_\_


If you have any questions or concerns pertaining to the above project, please feel free to contact the Builder directly. If you would like to talk to me, please call me. My business card is attached below. Please keep it for your records and call me now or at any time in the future.

\_\_\_\_\_

(attach Residential Construction Officer business card)

\_\_\_\_\_

To provide for a smoother process as construction goes forward and hopefully to reduce the amount of disruption in your neighborhood, the City of Manhattan Beach has adopted several rules and regulations pertaining to the building industry. Some of the more important regulations are highlighted on the reverse side of this card.



**PARKING**

We know that parking is a major concern in our city, especially around construction sites. In order to allow the Builder to perform the job, we normally issue a limited number of parking permits that allow parking adjacent to the project.

The permits do NOT allow blocking of adjacent driveways or blocking the flow of traffic.

If you need parking enforcement, please call dispatch at (310) 802-5159 and the Police Department will send an officer out to investigate the situation.

**CONSTRUCTION HOURS**

Authorized Construction Hours are:

7:30 am to 6:00 pm (Monday through Friday)  
9:00 am to 6:00 pm (Saturday)

All construction activity is prohibited on Sunday.

**PUBLIC HOLIDAYS**

All construction activity is prohibited on the following public holidays:

New Year's Day	Martin Luther King Day
Memorial Day	Independence Day
Labor Day	Veterans' Day
Thanksgiving Day	Friday after Thanksgiving
Christmas Day	

If you have any questions please call:

Residential Construction Officer: (310) 802-5506  
Parking Enforcement (dispatch): (310) 802-5159  
City Hall after Hours: (310) 802-5140

# Residential Construction Officer POSTCARD



## NOTIFICATION

Please be advised that a new construction project will soon be started in your neighborhood, consisting of:  Single Family Residence  Multiple Units  Other

\_\_\_\_\_  
Located at: \_\_\_\_\_

The Builder is: \_\_\_\_\_

The Builder's phone number is: \_\_\_\_\_

To provide for a smoother process as construction goes forward you are invited to attend a meeting that will be held at the construction site with the Builder and the City's Residential Construction Officer.

The meeting will be held on M Tu W Th F \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

For additional information, please contact the Residential Construction Officer at (310) 802-5506 or by e-mail at [rlarson@citymb.info](mailto:rlarson@citymb.info). Thank you.

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