

New Green Building Requirements

The Office of Housing and Construction Standards within the provincial government has initiated a public review of green building requirements. They have posted proposals for new energy efficiency changes to the BC Building Code. One proposal outlines new requirements for single-family houses and smaller multi-family residential, commercial and industrial buildings built under Part 9 of the Code. The other proposal outlines new requirements for larger buildings built under Part 3. If you would be interested in reviewing the proposed changes and offering your opinion, here is your chance.

The initiative stems from the Province's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent by the year 2020, and to set an energy conservation target equivalent to 50 per cent of BC Hydro's electricity demand growth by 2020. All sectors of the economy are expected to help achieve this reduction, including construction.

The first proposal applies to houses and all multi-family residential buildings of four storeys or less, as well as non-residential buildings that fall under Part 9 of the Building Code. Starting in April 2008, these buildings will need to meet new insulation requirements that will increase the energy efficiency of these buildings. Alternately, builders can choose to meet an increased EnerGuide for New Houses (EGNH) rating, a performance-based standard for energy efficiency, as a substitute for meeting the insulation requirements. The new energy efficiency requirements for houses will apply to new houses and additions to existing houses—basically, to all new construction. It is not, however, intended to apply to all existing houses that do not meet the new requirements. Heritage buildings, as defined in the Building Code, are exempted from the requirements in this proposal.

Compliance with the proposed requirements will be monitored in the same way that BC Building Code compliance is monitored today—through plan and site reviews by local building officials. Building officials may either confirm that the prescriptive requirements have been met or simply check for an EGNH label.

Builders will be able to obtain an EGNH rating label by following four steps:

- ⇒ **Step One** - An Energy Advisor, certified by NRCan, performs an energy assessment of the new house plans. Home builders and their staff will be able to become certified Energy Advisors through a three-day course offered by CHBA-BC, in order to complete this energy assessment.
- ⇒ **Step Two** - The Energy Advisor recommends energy-saving upgrades and suggests cost-effective options.
- ⇒ **Step Three** - Once construction is completed, an independent Energy Advisor (i.e., not employed by the builder) verifies that the energy upgrades were performed and conducts a blower door test. The cost of this verification step is approximately \$300 per house.
- ⇒ **Step Four** - After the data are collected, the house receives an EnerGuide for New Houses rating along with a label to fix to the furnace or electrical box.

For larger buildings constructed under Part 3 of the BC Building Code the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) standard will be implemented and enforced. There are two ASHRAE chapters in British Columbia: the BC Chapter, based in the Lower Mainland, and the Vancouver Island Chapter.

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ASHRAE 90.1 2004 includes standards for building envelope; heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems; service water heating; and power, lighting, and other equipment. ASHRAE standards vary for different climate zones. Climate zones are based on climatic regions and climate types. Regions are identified in the standard by the numbers 1 through 8, and climate types are identified by the letters A, B and C, for humid, dry and coastal climates, respectively. For example, southwest coastal communities correspond to ASHRAE Zone 5C, and Okanagan communities to Zone 5B.

Builders will have the option of demonstrating compliance with the new standards by means of energy performance simulation software and the Building Energy Cost Budget (ECB) method. If the ECB method is used, compliance would be confirmed by providing a Letter of Assurance signed by a professional engineer or architect stating that the building conforms to the ASHRAE standard 90.1-2004.

Simplified performance paths will be available for the building envelope and HVAC and lighting components. If a simplified performance path is followed, compliance would be confirmed by providing a Letter of Assurance signed by a professional engineer or architect stating that the building conforms to the ASHRAE standard 90.1-2004.

Compliance with ASHRAE 90.1 2004 can also be achieved by following the requirements that apply to the building's climate zone for each building component. The proposal gives highlights of the key prescriptive requirements that would apply to Zone 5C (coastal British Columbia) for steel-framed residential buildings with 49% glazing. If the prescriptive path is followed, compliance would be confirmed by providing a Letter of Assurance signed by a professional engineer or architect stating that the building conforms to the ASHRAE standard 90.1-2004.

A new Part 10 Building Efficiency and Resource Conservation will be added to the 2006 BC Building Code. The new Part 10 will include prescriptive insulation standards for houses and smaller multi-family residential, commercial and industrial buildings. It will also require conformance with ASHRAE 90.1 2004 standards for Part 3 buildings.

Please review the proposals in their entirety and provide your comments before **December 21, 2007** by using the Comment Form for Energy Efficiency Standards for Houses on the BC government websites as follows: <http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/green/part9comments.htm> (for Part 9 buildings)
-or-
<http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/green/part3comments.htm> (for Part 3 buildings)

EU-STEP NEWS

Job Fairs in Ontario!

Next February the Ministry of Economic Development is hosting a number of job fairs in Southern Ontario. BCCA is happy to take the lead in this great opportunity to attract skilled workers to British Columbia. The dates and locations are as follows:

February 26, 2008 – Kitchener/Waterloo
February 27, 2008 - Windsor

February 28, 2008 - Hamilton
February 29, 2008 - Toronto

If you are interested in participating please contact Regina Brodersen at BC Construction Association for further information, email: regina@bccassn.com or phone (250) 475-1077.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM
THE STAFF AT THE BC CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION



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The mission of the BCCA is to provide leadership and excellence in the representation of and service to British Columbia's construction industry

