



Office of Housing and  
Construction Standards



# What Building and Plumbing Officials Need to Know about the *Building Act*

**Full** Section B2 of the *Building Act* Guide

February 2017



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## 1. About this Guide

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In spring 2015, the Province passed the *Building Act*, the first Act dedicated solely to building and construction.

This guide, Section B2 of the *Building Act* Guide Series, explains how the *Building Act* affects building and plumbing officials working for or under contract to local governments and other local authorities. It focusses on the new qualification requirements for building and plumbing officials that the Act introduces. For general information about the Act, please see [www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact](http://www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact).

This guide may be updated over time; the most current version will always be available online. If the information you are seeking is not in this guide, check [online](#) for more information and [other guides](#) in this series. The goal is to provide an easy-to-understand resource for ongoing reference. The information provided here is for guidance only and is not a substitute for provincial legislation. It is not legal advice and should not be relied upon for that purpose.

### **A Note about the *Building Act* Guide**

The *Building Act* Guide provides information about the Act for local authorities, building officials, and those working in the building construction sector. Sections of the Guide are released as the Act and the supporting regulations come into force. The following Guide sections are available [online](#):

#### **Part A – Introduction**

- A1 - Understanding B.C.'s Building Regulatory System
- A2 - A Guide to the *Building Act*: Modernizing B.C.'s Building Regulatory System
- A3 - *Building Act* Brochure
- A4 - *Building Act* Introductory PowerPoint Presentation

#### **Part B – Information for Specific Stakeholders**

- B1 - What Local Governments Need to Know about the *Building Act*
- B1 Appendix - Changes for Local Governments Under Section 5 of the *Building Act*
- B2 Short - What Building and Plumbing Officials Need to Know about the *Building Act*
- B2 Full - What Building and Plumbing Officials Need to Know about the *Building Act* (this section)

#### **Part C – New Procedures (How to...)**

- C1 - A Guide to Requesting a Local Authority Variation



## 2. Introduction: New Qualification Requirements

Under the *Building Act*, building officials (including plumbing officials) will need to be qualified if they work for a local government or any other local authority (see sidebar) and make decisions about compliance with the BC Building Code or other provincial building regulations. The *Building Act* marks the first time qualifications have been required for this occupation. The new qualification requirements support the professionalism of building officials and will improve consistency in how the BC Building Code is interpreted, applied, and enforced.

Typically, building officials are employed by local governments to monitor the compliance of building design and construction with the BC Building Code and with requirements in local building bylaws. They review plans, issue building permits, and monitor buildings under construction.

In this guide, the term ‘building official’ includes **anyone** who makes a decision for or on behalf of a local government on whether a matter conforms to a provincial building regulation. More specific terms (e.g., plumbing official) are used only as needed.

To be considered qualified, building officials will have to:

1. Be a **member** in good standing of the Building Officials’ Association of British Columbia (BOABC);
2. **Pass exams** according to the level of their responsibilities;
3. Undertake annual **continuing professional development** (CPD);
4. Be entered in the **register of qualified building officials**; and
5. Pay an **annual fee to the administrative authority** and submit an **annual report** to the registrar.<sup>1</sup>

Building officials employed by or under contract to the City of Vancouver **do not** need to meet the qualification requirements, as the *Building Act* does not apply in Vancouver. Under the *Vancouver Charter*, Vancouver has authority to establish its own building bylaw and set its own qualification requirements for the building officials it employs.

The transition period for the qualification requirements starts on February 28, 2017, when the requirements come into force. From that date, the qualification requirements take effect in two steps over four years:

### Q: What are local authorities?

**A:** Under the *Building Act*, local authorities are official bodies that may (but are not obliged) to administer and enforce provincial building regulations such as the BC Building Code. Local authorities include municipalities, regional districts, Treaty First Nations, Nisga’a Lisims Government and the University of British Columbia’s Board of Governors. Since most local authorities are local governments, this guide uses the term ‘local government.’

<sup>1</sup> *Building Act* sections 11 (1) and 13.



1. **On or before August 28, 2017** (i.e., within six months of February 28, 2017), building officials must become members of the BOABC; and
2. **On or before February 28, 2021** (i.e., within four years of February 28, 2017), building officials must pass the requisite exams for the class/scope of practice at which they work and be entered in the register of qualified building officials.

This guide explains these requirements and the four-year transition period.

## 2.1 Delegation of Administrative Authority and Designation of the Registrar

The *Building Act* enables the Minister who is responsible for the *Building Act* to enter into an agreement with an external organization to administer the qualification requirements on behalf of the Province. The Minister has selected the BOABC to be the administrative authority, due to their existing role as the professional association for building officials, their linkages to the Alliance of Canadian Building Officials' Association (ACBOA), and their expertise in building official education and qualifications.

Derek Townson, the Executive Director of the BOABC, has been designated as the registrar for a five-year term ending February 28, 2022. Among other responsibilities, the registrar maintains the register of qualified building officials, as explained in Section 5 of this guide.

## 2.2 New Qualification Requirements and New Terms

The *Building Act* is not the first effort to enhance building officials' knowledge and skills. Prior to the Act, both the BOABC and the Plumbing Officials' Association of British Columbia (POABC) established voluntary certification programs for their members. These programs involve:

- Being a member in good standing;
- Passing exams to be certified at different levels of expertise;
- Undertaking and reporting on continuing professional development; and
- Work experience.

Building and plumbing officials familiar with the certification programs will see that many of the new qualification requirements are the same as, or very similar to, the certification requirements. The BOABC will continue to offer the voluntary building and plumbing certification programs after the new qualification requirements come into force.<sup>2</sup> Building officials **must** become *qualified* within the timelines prescribed under the *Building Act*; building officials **can choose** to be *certified* as well. Apart from paying an annual fee to the administrative authority, certified building and plumbing officials may not notice a significant difference between qualification and certification. However, under the *Building Act*, some of the terms used to describe *qualification* are different from those used to describe *certification*.

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<sup>2</sup> The Plumbing Officials' Association of British Columbia has passed a resolution to take steps to dissolve as an entity after the qualification requirements come into force in 2017. The BOABC will administer the qualification requirements for all classes of building officials, including plumbing officials.



### 3. Who Must be Qualified

Any individual who decides whether a matter conforms to a provincial building regulation on behalf of a local government must be either qualified or exempt from the qualification requirements (see Section 3.4 below). In a decision, an individual exercises informed judgement which typically results in the approval or rejection of:

- An aspect of building plans;
- An application for a building permit or occupancy permit; or
- An aspect of construction that is being reviewed.

The *Building Act* does not define ‘building official.’ A building official under the Act could be a plan checker, a building inspector, a plumbing inspector, or even someone working in the fire or any other department within a local government. The need for qualification is based on whether a local government employee or contractor makes decisions about compliance with the BC Building Code or other provincial building regulations; those who do must be qualified, regardless of job title.

**What is a provincial building regulation?** A ‘provincial building regulation’ includes all three Divisions of the BC Building Code, as well as referenced standards, and referenced codes.<sup>3</sup> It also includes any other provincial building regulations, and the standards and codes they reference. A provincial building regulation **does not** include technical or administrative requirements found in local bylaws.

Those who make decisions about post-occupancy compliance with the BC Fire Code *do not* need to meet the qualification requirements for building officials.

#### 3.1 What Making a Code Compliance Decision Means

What does it mean to make an informed judgement (i.e., a decision) about whether a matter conforms to a provincial building regulation? In other words, what is considered a ‘Code compliance decision’ for which the individual making it needs to be qualified?

Building officials under the *Building Act* are not the same as building inspectors under the *Local Government Act* or *Community Charter*, whose functions typically include a broader range of activities. However, if a building inspector’s work includes making decisions about compliance with provincial building regulations, the building inspector is required to be qualified as a building official.

<sup>3</sup> The National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) standards are examples of referenced standards in the BC Building Code; the National Energy Code for Buildings and the National Farm Building Code are examples of referenced codes.



If an individual reviews plans and then passes their assessment of the plans' Code compliance on to another individual who accepts or rejects the plans, which of those individuals decided whether the plans conform to the BC Building Code? Similarly, what is the difference between giving a building official advice (such as engineering or fire department staff might do), versus making a Code compliance decision? The answer in each case can be determined by simple analysis: Who decided? Whose judgement determined the outcome?

'To decide' means exercising informed judgement about the matter in question. 'Deciding' includes making decisions about compliance with Divisions A, B, or C of the BC Building Code (or any other provincial building regulation) and making decisions about the compliance of alternative solutions. Examples of decision making for which an individual must be qualified include (but are not limited to):

- Concluding whether a building plan, or any aspect of a building plan, conforms to a building regulation, and acting on that conclusion by rejecting or accepting that plan, or an aspect of that plan;
- Reviewing and deciding whether or not to accept a submitted Letter of Assurance; or
- Reviewing an aspect of building construction and concluding that it 'passes' or 'fails' or 'needs correction' or needs review by the registered professional responsible.

Common activities that indicate that Code compliance decisions have been made include (but are not limited to):

- Rejecting a building permit application for reasons of noncompliance with a building regulation;
- Issuing a building permit;
- Issuing a correction notice; or
- Issuing an occupancy permit.

The *Building Act* requires that **anyone** who makes an informed decision about whether a matter conforms to a provincial building regulation must be qualified to do so (or be exempt from the qualification requirements). It is inconsistent with the Act for unqualified individuals to pass their compliance assessments on to a qualified individual who makes compliance decisions without further analysis or judgement. Under the Act, those initial compliance assessments would be compliance decisions, and the individuals making them need to be qualified.

From time to time, building officials may seek advice from others to gather sufficient information to make a compliance decision. A building official might seek advice from any number of individuals: a retired colleague who formerly worked as a building official; someone working in their engineering department; or a building official working for a different local government. The qualification requirements are not meant to inhibit this type of information gathering. While building officials are encouraged to gather information so that their judgement on any matter is well informed, it is the building official who makes and is responsible for the decision and who must be qualified under the Act.



Some local government building department activities do not involve making compliance decisions:

- Administrative, clerical, financial, or other building department tasks;
- Determining whether the local government’s building bylaw requires a building permit<sup>4</sup> for any given project (this is considered an administrative task under the local government’s building bylaw);
- Managing or directing staff who make Code compliance decisions, unless that direction results in the manager or director making compliance decisions;
- Determining and applying building permit or other fees;
- Determining whether a building permit application meets the administrative requirements in a building bylaw;
- Receiving and filing a Letter of Assurance or other document for later review and decision by someone else; and
- Deciding about compliance with the BC Fire Code, except as specifically referenced in the BC Building Code.

The roles of local government staff or contractors may differ from one local government to the next. For this reason, identifying who makes compliance decisions will depend on each local government’s policies, procedures, and bylaw requirements.

### 3.2 Classes of Building Officials and Scopes of Practice

The *Building Act* allows the Minister to establish different classes of building officials with different scopes of practice. Different classes enable different types of expertise to be recognized. Scopes of practice define the limitations, if any, on the matters for which an individual in a specific class may make Code compliance decisions.

The classes and scopes of practice are broadly modelled on the levels in the voluntary certification programs offered by the BOABC and the POABC, with some modifications:

- The building level 1 class is broader than the BOABC’s certification level 1, while the building level 2 and 3 classes are equivalent to certification levels 2 and 3, as outlined in Table 3.1; and
- The plumbing level 1 class is broader than the POABC’s certification level 1, while the plumbing level 2 class is equivalent to certification level 2, as outlined in Table 3.2.

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<sup>4</sup> Determining whether or not the BC Building Code ‘applies’ (Article 1.1.1.1., Div A)—which may or may not trigger the requirement for a building permit—is considered to be a Code compliance decision.



**Table 3.1**

**BUILDING CLASSES**

Qualified individuals in the building classes may decide whether a matter conforms to a building regulation, according to their scope of practice, except for matters in the Plumbing Code.

Class of Building Official	Scope of Practice in the Building Act General Regulation <sup>5</sup>	Plain-Language Description of the Scope of Practice
<b>Building Level 1</b>	Conformance with the building regulations, other than the Plumbing Code, of the following <i>buildings</i> :	Examples (and not definitive lists) are provided for buildings in each of paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) as numbered in the regulation. In all cases, the wording in the regulation prevails.
	Paragraph (a) <sup>6</sup> : a Part 9 <i>building</i> classified as a Group C <i>major occupancy</i> that does not contain <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. more than 2 <i>dwelling units</i>, or</li> <li>ii. a separate <i>basement</i>;</li> </ol>	Paragraph (a) includes these Part 9 residential buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Single family dwelling</li> <li>▪ Single family dwelling with secondary suite</li> <li>▪ Side-by-side duplex</li> <li>▪ Up/down duplex</li> <li>▪ One or two unit townhouse</li> <li>▪ Dwelling unit over storage garage serving individual dwelling unit ('carriage house')</li> <li>▪ Custodial, convalescent, and residential care homes (See Article 9.10.2.2., Division B)</li> </ul>
	Paragraph (b): a Part 9 <i>building</i> classified as a Group C <i>major occupancy</i> that does not contain <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. a <i>dwelling unit</i> above another <i>dwelling unit</i>,</li> <li>ii. a <i>firewall</i>, or</li> <li>iii. a separate <i>basement</i>;</li> </ol>	Paragraph (b) includes these Part 9 residential buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Row house or row townhouse – any number of units but limited to 600 m<sup>2</sup> in building area</li> <li>▪ Motel with no unit above any other unit</li> </ul> Buildings falling within Paragraph (b) must not include a firewall.
	Paragraph (c): a Part 9 <i>building</i> , other than a <i>farm building</i> , that <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. is a detached garage, or accessory <i>building</i>, that serves a <i>dwelling unit</i> in a <i>building</i> described in paragraph (a) or (b),</li> <li>ii. is located on the same property as that <i>building</i>, and</li> <li>iii. does not contain a separate <i>basement</i>;</li> </ol>	Paragraph (c) includes these Part 9 accessory buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Garage or other accessory building on the same property and serving a house, duplex, townhouse or row house - includes workshops, studios, salons, etc.</li> <li>▪ Multiple stall garage on the same property as and serving a townhouse complex</li> <li>▪ Pool storage, maintenance, office, or other accessory building on the same property as and serving a townhouse complex</li> </ul>
	Paragraph (d): a Part 9 <i>building</i> classified as a Group F, Division 2 or 3 <i>major occupancy</i> , other than a <i>farm building</i> , that <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. is one <i>storey</i> in <i>building height</i>, and</li> <li>ii. does not contain               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. more than one <i>suite</i>, or</li> <li>B. a separate <i>basement</i>.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	Paragraph (d) includes these Part 9, one storey, industrial buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Workshop</li> <li>▪ Storage garage</li> <li>▪ Repair garage</li> <li>▪ Barn (other than a farm building)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Note:</b> In the Building Act General Regulation, separate <i>basement</i> is defined as a <i>basement</i> that is separate from the building above it. This is intended to refer to basements as outlined in BC Building Code Articles 3.2.1.2. or 9.10.4.3., Division B. Buildings containing basements considered as separate buildings are out of scope for a building official in the Building Level 1 class.</p>		
<b>Building Level 2</b>	Conformance with the building regulations, other than the Plumbing Code, of a Part 9 <i>building</i> .	Includes all Part 9 buildings, including those found within the scope of the Building Level 1 class.
<b>Building Level 3</b>	Conformance with the building regulations, other than the Plumbing Code, of a <i>building</i> .	Includes all Part 9 buildings, including those found within the scope of the Building Level 1 and 2 classes, and all Part 3 buildings.

<sup>5</sup> The italicized terms used in the Building Act General Regulation to describe scopes of practice are specifically defined in the BC Building Code and are used in the General Regulation with the same meaning.

<sup>6</sup> The numbering—Paragraph (a), (b), (c), and (d)—describing the scope of practice of the Building Level 1 class refers to the numbering used in the Building Act General Regulation.



**Table 3.2**

**PLUMBING CLASSES**

Qualified individuals in the plumbing classes may decide whether a matter conforms to a building regulation as it relates to plumbing systems, foundation drainage, or hydronic heating systems, according to their scope of practice.

Class of Building Official	Scope of Practice in the Building Act General Regulation <sup>7</sup>	Description of the Scope of Practice
<p><b>Plumbing Level 1</b></p>	<p>Conformance with the building regulations, as they relate to one or more of the following:<sup>8</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>plumbing systems</i>;</li> <li>b. <i>foundation drainage</i>;</li> <li>c. hydronic heating systems;</li> </ul> <p>of the following <i>buildings</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. a Part 9 <i>building</i>;</li> <li>e. a new Part 3 <i>building</i>, other than a <i>building</i> classified as a Group B, Division 2 <i>major occupancy</i>, that               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. is no more than 4 <i>storeys</i> in <i>building height</i>, and</li> <li>ii. does not contain an advanced <i>plumbing system</i>;</li> </ul> </li> <li>f. an existing Part 3 <i>building</i>, if the work does not involve               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. a change in <i>occupancy</i> to a Group B, Division 2 <i>major occupancy</i>, or</li> <li>ii. the installation of a new advanced <i>plumbing system</i>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Paragraph d. includes all Part 9 buildings</p> <p>Paragraph e. includes all new Part 3 buildings except those:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ containing treatment major occupancies,</li> <li>▪ five or more storeys in building height, or</li> <li>▪ with an advanced plumbing system, which means a plumbing system that           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ is used to drain or vent acid or corrosive wastes, or</li> <li>○ contains a bedpan washer, trade waste system, vent stack, or yoke vent.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Paragraph f. includes alterations of all existing Part 3 buildings except if the work involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a change in occupancy from any occupancy to a treatment occupancy, or</li> <li>▪ the installation of a new advanced plumbing system (as defined above).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Plumbing Level 2</b></p>	<p>Conformance with the building regulations, as they relate to one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>plumbing systems</i>;</li> <li>b. <i>foundation drainage</i>;</li> <li>c. hydronic heating systems</li> </ul> <p>of a <i>building</i>.</p>	<p>The words “of a building” are intended to include all Part 9 buildings and all Part 3 buildings.</p>

**Note for both plumbing level 1 and 2 classes:** The words ‘building regulations, as they relate to ... plumbing systems’ are intended to include plumbing systems *and* directly related components, materials, and construction. For example, plumbing officials might review the pipe firestopping as well as the pipe, the correct placement of the water closet (BC Building Code Sentence 3.7.2.10.(3)) as well as the toilet flange, or the installation of the seismic restraint for the service water heater (BC Building Code Sentence 9.31.6.2.(3)) as well as the service water heater piping.

<sup>7</sup> The italicized terms used in the Building Act General Regulation to describe scopes of practice are specifically defined in the BC Building Code and are used in the General Regulation with the same meaning.

<sup>8</sup> The numbering—Paragraphs a to f—describing the scope of practice of the Plumbing Official Level 1 class refers to the numbering used in the Building Act General Regulation.



### 3.3 Additional Classes of Building Officials Under Consideration

The Province formed a working group in 2016 to gather advice and feedback prior to preparing the regulations for building official qualifications. Four of the issues that emerged as part of that work may require additional classes of building officials to resolve.

#### 1. Fire Department Staff Making Code Compliance Decisions for Fire-Related Matters

**Issue:** Not all individuals making Code compliance decisions for or on behalf of a local government work in building departments. A number of individuals who work in fire departments make decisions about whether certain fire prevention and response matters conform to provincial building regulations, but these individuals do not meet a provincial qualification standard. As it stands, the *Building Act* will require these individuals to meet building official qualifications by the end of the four-year transition period.

##### **Provincial Response: Exemption and Consultation on Potential New Fire Prevention and Response Class**

**Temporary Exemption:** Local government fire department staff (whether they are employees, volunteer, or contractors) will be temporarily exempt from the qualification requirements *for compliance decisions they make in relation to the fire prevention and response matters identified in the Building Act General Regulation* (and described in Section 3.4 and Table 3.3 below). This temporary exemption is intended to recognize that in some local governments, fire department staff have been assigned the responsibility for making Code compliance decisions about these matters.

**Consultation:** During this temporary exemption, the Province will undertake additional consultation with stakeholders to determine if a new class of building official should be developed for fire prevention and response matters, or if these individuals will remain exempt. If the Province determines a new class is warranted, it will amend the regulation to establish a fire prevention and response class and specify appropriate exam(s) and CPD. For example, those in the new class would not be expected to take the full set of exams required for building officials in the building classes, but would write an exam(s) that focuses on the fire prevention and response matters listed in the Building Act General Regulation. Updates on this work will be posted on the *Building Act* website: [www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact](http://www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact).

Qualified building officials can make compliance decisions about the full range of matters within their class and scope of practice, including decisions about fire prevention and response matters. The potential creation of a fire prevention and response class would not change that, and is not intended to reduce the role of building officials. Rather, it provides an opportunity for fire staff, who may hold specialized knowledge of these matters, to become qualified under the Act without qualifying in the Building class.

#### 2. Plumbing Officials Making Code Compliance Decisions for Fire Suppression Matters

**Issue:** Similarly to Issue #1, plumbing officials are making Code compliance decisions about fire suppression matters, such as those outlined in Table 3.3 below, but these matters are not within the plumbing scopes of practice established under the *Building Act* and Building Act General Regulation.



**Provincial Response: Exemption and Consultation on Potential New Fire Suppression Class**

**Temporary Exemption:** Local government plumbing officials will be temporarily exempt from the qualification requirements *for compliance decisions they make in relation to the fire suppression matters identified in the Building Act General Regulation* (and described in Section 3.4 and Table 3.3 below).

**Consultation:** During this temporary exemption, the Province will undertake additional consultation with stakeholders to determine if a new class of building official should be developed for fire suppression matters, or if these individuals will remain exempt. If the Province determines a new class is warranted, it will amend the regulation to establish a specialized fire suppression class and specify appropriate exam(s) and CPD. For example, those in the new class would not be expected to take the full set of exams required for building officials in the building classes, but would write an exam(s) that focuses on fire suppression matters. Updates on this work will be posted on the *Building Act* website: [www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact](http://www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact).

### 3. Need for ‘Entry Level’ Building Officials

**Issue:** Currently, local governments can have difficulty recruiting building officials when temporary or permanent vacancies arise. This situation could become more difficult once all building officials must be qualified.

**Provincial Response: Consultation on Potential New ‘Entry Level’ Class**

During the transition period, the Province will undertake additional work and consultation on an ‘Entry Level’ class. Individuals in this class would likely be able to make limited compliance decisions with possible guidance from a mentor. Qualification would likely involve short, intensive training and an appropriate exam, and a requirement to qualify at the building level 1 class within a prescribed time such as 6 to 12 months. If the Province determines such a class is warranted, it will amend the regulation to establish an entry level class and specify an appropriate exam. Updates on this work will be posted on the *Building Act* website: [www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact](http://www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact).

### 4. Level 3 Building Official Required to Accept Letters of Assurance for Part 3 Buildings

**Issue:** Prior to the qualification requirements, any building official could accept Letters of Assurance for a Part 3 building project from registered professionals (i.e., registered architects and professional engineers). After the transition period, building officials will only be able to accept Letters of Assurance for buildings falling within the scope of their qualification. For example, only building officials qualified at the building level 3 class will be authorized to accept Letters of Assurance for Part 3 buildings. This means every jurisdiction that regulates construction would need to employ or contract with a building official qualified at the building level 3 class, even if Part 3 buildings are rarely built and the jurisdiction relies solely on registered professionals. The need for a building level 3 class building official to accept Letters of Assurance could create hardship for local governments.

**Provincial Response: Consultation on Potential New ‘Professional Reliance’ Class**

During the transition period, the Province will undertake additional work and consultation on a ‘Professional Reliance’ class. This class would enable a building official qualified at a level lower than the building level 3 class to accept Letters



of Assurance for Part 3 Buildings and to issue building and occupancy permits with sole reliance on the registered professionals. Building officials in the professional reliance class would not be able to perform any other work within the scope of practice of the building level 3 class. If the Province determines such a class is warranted, it will amend the regulation to establish a professional reliance class and specify an appropriate exam. Updates on this work will be posted on the *Building Act* website: [www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact](http://www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact).

### 3.4 Individuals Exempt from the Qualification Requirements

#### Members of AIBC

Individuals are exempt from the qualification requirements if they are working as building officials for a local government and are registered and licensed as an architect by the Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC).

#### Professional Engineers (APEGBC)

Individuals are exempt from the qualification requirements if they are working as building officials for a local government and are members of and registered as Professional Engineers with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia (APEGBC), or are APEGBC members holding a limited licence whose scope of practice includes consulting on building regulations.

#### Individuals Holding Qualifications Under the *Safety Standards Act*

Individuals are exempt from the qualification requirements if they are:

- Appointed by a local government under section 11 (safety officers) of the *Safety Standards Act*;
- Hold a certificate of qualification for regulated work for electrical equipment, gas systems or gas equipment; and
- Employed by or under contract to a local government to decide whether a matter conforms to a code or standard that is referenced by the BC Building Code or other provincial building regulations; for example, the BC Electrical Code.

This includes safety officers, electrical inspectors, and gas inspectors who are appointed and qualified under the *Safety Standards Act* and regulations. The decisions made by the exempt individual must be within the scope of their qualification: electrical inspectors may make decisions about electrical installations, for example, but not about the structural components of a building.

#### Individuals Making Decisions about Fire Prevention and Response or Fire Suppression: Temporary Exemption

As explained in Section 3.3 of this guide, individuals falling within the 'class of persons' making compliance decisions about the fire prevention and response, or fire suppression matters identified in Table 3.3 below (as taken from the Building Act General Regulation) are temporarily exempt from the qualification requirements.



**Table 3.3**

Class of Person Who is Exempt	Scope of the Exemption
<p><b>Fire Prevention and Response</b></p> <p>Individuals retained as employees or independent contractors by a fire department of a local authority, or who are volunteers with a fire department of a local authority, if the individuals make compliance decisions only in relation to the fire prevention and response matters addressed in the following provisions of Division B of the BC Building Code:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Sentence 3.2.3.1.(8) <i>[limiting distance]</i></li> <li>ii. Subsection 3.2.4. <i>[fire alarm and detection systems]</i></li> <li>iii. Subsection 3.2.5. <i>[provisions for firefighting]</i></li> <li>iv. Subsection 3.2.6. <i>[additional requirements for high buildings]</i></li> <li>v. Subsection 3.2.7. <i>[lighting and emergency power systems]</i></li> <li>vi. Subsection 3.4.5. <i>[exit signs]</i></li> <li>vii. Article 3.4.6.19. <i>[floor numbering]</i></li> <li>viii. Clause 6.2.1.4.(1)(a) and (c) <i>[installation standards]</i></li> <li>ix. Article 6.2.1.5. <i>[fireplaces]</i></li> <li>x. Article 6.2.2.7. <i>[commercial cooking equipment]</i></li> <li>xi. Section 6.3. <i>[chimneys and venting equipment]</i></li> <li>xii. Subsection 9.9.11. <i>[signs]</i></li> <li>xiii. Article 9.9.12.2. <i>[required lighting in egress facilities]</i></li> <li>xiv. Article 9.9.12.3. <i>[emergency lighting]</i></li> <li>xv. Article 9.10.1.4. <i>[items under Part 6 jurisdiction]</i></li> <li>xvi. Clause 9.10.14.3.(1)(a) and (2)(b) <i>[limiting distance and fire department response]</i></li> <li>xvii. Clause 9.10.15.3.(1)(a) and (2)(b) <i>[limiting distance and fire department response]</i></li> <li>xxviii. Subsection 9.10.18. <i>[alarm and detection systems]</i></li> <li>xix. Subsection 9.10.19. <i>[smoke alarms]</i></li> <li>xx. Subsection 9.10.20 <i>[firefighting]</i></li> <li>xxi. Article 9.10.21.7. <i>[smoke detectors]</i></li> <li>xxii. Article 9.10.21.8. <i>[portable fire extinguishers]</i></li> <li>xxiii. Article 9.10.21.9. <i>[hose stations]</i></li> <li>xxiv. Clause 9.33.5.2.(1)(a) <i>[installation of oil burning equipment]</i></li> <li>xxv. Clause 9.33.5.2.(1)(c) <i>[installation of solid-fuel burning appliances and equipment]</i></li> <li>xxvi. Article 9.33.5.4. <i>[fireplaces]</i></li> <li>xxvii. Subsection 9.33.10. <i>[chimney and venting equipment]</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Fire Suppression</b></p> <p>Individuals retained as an employee or independent contractor by a local authority to act as a building official responsible for plumbing, if the individuals make compliance decisions only in relation to the fire suppression matters addressed in the following provisions of Division B of the BC Building Code:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Article 3.2.5.7. <i>[water supply]</i></li> <li>ii. Article 3.2.5.8. <i>[standpipe systems]</i></li> <li>iii. Article 3.2.5.9. <i>[standpipe system design]</i></li> <li>iv. Article 3.2.5.10. <i>[hose connections]</i></li> <li>v. Article 3.2.5.11. <i>[hose stations]</i></li> <li>vi. Article 3.2.5.12. <i>[automatic sprinkler systems]</i></li> <li>vii. Article 3.2.5.13. <i>[combustible sprinkler piping]</i></li> <li>viii. Article 3.2.5.14. <i>[sprinklered service space]</i></li> <li>ix. Article 3.2.5.15. <i>[fire department connections]</i></li> <li>x. Article 3.2.5.17. <i>[protection from freezing]</i></li> <li>xi. Article 3.2.5.18. <i>[fire pumps]</i></li> <li>xii. Article 9.10.21.9. <i>[hose stations]</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Note:</b> The matters within the ‘fire suppression’ class are embedded within the ‘fire prevention and response’ class. For example, the fire suppression matters in Articles 3.2.5.7, 3.2.5.8, and so forth, fall within provisions for firefighting (Subsection 3.2.5.), listed in the fire prevention and response class.</p>	



## 4. The Five Qualification Requirements

To be considered qualified under the *Building Act*, building officials must meet five qualification requirements.

### 1. Be a Member of the BOABC

Building officials working for a local government must become members of the BOABC by August 28, 2017—six months after the transition period starts on February 28, 2017. As noted in Section 3 of this guide, the term ‘building official’ means anyone working for a local authority who makes a decision on whether a matter conforms to a provincial building regulation, so it may require individuals who may not have been members in the past to become BOABC members. Plumbing officials who are not BOABC members need to become members by August 28, 2017 as well. For information on how to apply for or renew BOABC membership, visit the BOABC website at [www.boabc.org](http://www.boabc.org).

### 2. Pass Exams According to Your Class

Building officials will need to pass exams according to their class (i.e., the level at which they work) to meet the exam qualification requirement. The number of exams required for each class is the same as the number required under the BOABC’s and the POABC’s voluntary certification programs, as shown in Table 4.1. Exams must be taken in order by class, meaning exams for the building level 1 class must be taken before the exams for the building level 2 class and before exams for building level 3 class, and similarly for the plumbing classes. Exams within a class can be written in any order.

	Class of Building Official Under the <i>Building Act</i>	Equivalent BOABC or POABC Certification Level	Exam Requirements Under the <i>Building Act</i>
Building	Building Level 1 Class	Level One (1) (one and two-family dwellings)	BOABC Level I Exam 1 BOABC Level I Exam 2
	Building Level 2 Class	Level Two (2) (all Part 9 buildings)	BOABC Level II Exam 5 BOABC Level II Exam 6
	Building Level 3 Class	Level Three (3) (all buildings)	BOABC Level III Exam 7 BOABC Level III Exam 8 BOABC Level III Exam 9 BOABC Level III Exam 10
Plumbing	Plumbing Level 1 Class	Level 1 (residential and light commercial construction)	POABC Level 1
	Plumbing Level 2 Class	Level 2 (more complex commercial, industrial and high-rise construction)	POABC Level 2



All exams are developed and administered by the BOABC. Training and exams will be developed as needed to accommodate any changes introduced by new classes and scopes of practice.

Building and plumbing officials who have already passed exams to be *certified* at a given level will **not** need to rewrite them to meet the exam qualification requirement for the equivalent new class, as long as their certification is up to date.

### 3. Undertake Continuing Professional Development

Continuing professional development (CPD) refers to the maintenance and enhancement of a building official’s professional knowledge and skills throughout their career. Building officials will have to earn a minimum of 10 CPD points each calendar year to meet the CPD qualification requirement—the same number of points required by the BOABC’s voluntary certification program. As shown in Table 4.2, building officials will have a wide range of options to choose from to meet the CPD requirement.

Code	CPD Type	CPD Point Allocation
A1	Attendance at conferences offered by the BOABC that directly address one or more of the Blocks/General Areas of Competence published in the National Occupational & Training Standard: Professional Building Official (2007).	5 points for one day 8 points for two days 10 points for three days
A2	Attendance at Code change seminars offered by the BOABC when a new edition of the BC Building Code is enacted.	5 points for one day
A3	Successful completion of courses that directly address one or more of the Blocks/General Areas of Competence published in the National Occupational and Training Standard: Professional Building Official (2007).	5 points per course
A4	Attendance at meetings, seminars, workshops or webinars that directly address one or more of the Blocks/General Areas of Competence published in the National Occupational & Training Standard: Professional Building Official (2007). Note: This category includes BOABC zone meetings.	1 point per hour
A5	Development and delivery of a presentation or lecture directly relevant to one or more of the Blocks/General Areas of Competence published in the National Occupational and Training Standard: Professional Building Official (2007).	5 points per developed and delivered presentation or lecture (no additional points for subsequent delivery)
A6	Serving on the BOABC’s Executive Committee, Education Committee or Examination Development Committee	5 points per year

Building officials need to keep records of their CPD so they can report on it annually to the registrar, once they are listed in the register. CPD in the A2 category is mandatory for qualified officials: Building officials must attend code change seminars offered by the BOABC when a new edition of the BC Building Code comes into effect (typically every five years).

Building officials who are initially entered in the register of qualified building officials on or before September 30 in any given year will have their CPD requirement pro-rated based on the date they were entered in the register. Those entered in the register on or after October 1 will not be required to acquire CPD points for that calendar year.





As the administrator of the qualification requirements, the BOABC is obliged to ensure that low-cost, accessible CPD is available to all BOABC members.

#### 4. Be Entered in the Register of Qualified Building Officials

To be qualified, building officials must be entered in the register of qualified building officials. The register is an official list of building officials who meet the qualification requirements set by the *Building Act*. The register is maintained by the registrar.

To be entered in the register, a building official must apply in writing to the registrar. Once a building official applies, they will be entered in the register if they pay an annual fee to the administrative authority and can show the registrar they meet the qualification requirements under section 11 (1) of the *Building Act*.

Typically, a building official applies to be entered in the register after they pass the exams for the building level 1 class or plumbing level 1 class. Once in the register, a building official may apply to the registrar to update their qualification if they pass exams for a higher or different class of qualification (for example, a building official qualified at the building official level 1 class who passes the exams for the plumbing official level 1 class and wants the register updated to reflect this change).

#### 5. Pay an Annual Fee and Submit an Annual Report

When building officials first apply to be entered in the register, they must pay a fee to the administrative authority (the BOABC) that is intended to recover the costs of administering the qualifications. The fee must be paid each year a building official is listed in the register. Once entered in the register, qualified building officials must submit an annual report to the registrar. The report must demonstrate that they have met their annual CPD requirement for the previous calendar year and confirm that they are a member in good standing of the BOABC.

The annual fee is pro-rated for building officials who apply to be entered in the register partway through a calendar year.

#### 4.1 When the Qualification Requirements Take Effect

The qualification requirements come into force on February 28, 2017 and take effect in two steps over a four-year transition period:

1. **On or before August 28, 2017** (i.e., within six months of February 28, 2017), building officials must become members of the BOABC;
2. **On or before February 28, 2021** (i.e., within four years of February 28, 2017), building officials must pass the requisite exams for the class/scope of practice at which they work and be entered in the register of qualified building officials.

The four-year transition period is intended to enable local governments to design staffing models that meet the needs of their building departments and to provide sufficient time for building officials to meet the qualification requirements.



## 4.2 Costs to Become Qualified

Meeting the qualification requirements will entail various costs, estimates of which are outlined in Table 4.3. BOABC membership fees are pro-rated for those who join partway through the calendar year. For the most current information, contact the BOABC.

<b>Table 4.3</b>			
<b>Fee Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost: Frequency and Type</b>	<b>Estimated Amount (Subject to Change)</b>
<b>Membership and Administrative Fees</b>			
BOABC membership application fee	One-time application fee if an individual is not already a BOABC member.	One-time cost Mandatory	\$125 + GST
BOABC membership fee	Annual fee to be a BOABC member.	Annual fee Mandatory	\$420 + GST
Annual administration fee	An annual fee payable to the BOABC, to recover the costs of administration.	Annual fee Mandatory	\$50 + GST
<b>Exam Fees</b>			
Exam fees	Fee for exams administered by BOABC. One-time fee unless an exam is failed and must be rewritten.	One-time cost Mandatory	\$236 per exam
Exam preparation courses	Optional courses offered by various organizations to help prepare for exams.	One-time cost Optional	\$500 - \$800 per course
<b>Continuing Professional Development Fees</b>			
Code change seminar	Code change seminars offered by the BOABC when a new edition of the BC Building Code is enacted.	Typically every 5 years Mandatory	\$300
Continuing professional development	Ongoing training to maintain and enhance professional knowledge.	Annual Mandatory	Varies with the CPD



## 5. The Registrar and the Register of Qualified Building Officials

The registrar is the person designated by the Minister to maintain the official list—or register—of who is qualified in B.C. as a building official under the *Building Act*. The Minister has designated Derek Townson, the Executive Director of the BOABC, as the registrar for a five-year term ending February 28, 2022.

The register will be made available online by BOABC and will include:

- The name of each building official;
- The building official’s current class and the date they qualified for the class; and
- If applicable, previous classes and the date(s) on which they qualified for them.

The registrar *must* remove a building official from the register if they:

- Do not meet one or more of the qualification requirements;
- Do not submit an annual report or pay the annual fee to the registrar; or
- Request to be removed from the register (such as upon retirement).

The registrar is required to keep a record of building officials who are removed from the register for 15 years following their removal.

A building official who ceases to be a member in good standing of BOABC must promptly notify the registrar in writing; the registrar has authority to remove them from the register until the matter is resolved.

### 5.1 Administrative Penalties Under the *Building Act*

The *Building Act* allows the registrar to impose administrative penalties for contraventions of the qualification requirements in the Act by building officials or their employers. A penalty can be administrative or monetary, and can be imposed on building officials if they:

- Make Code compliance decisions without being a qualified building official;
- Make Code compliance decisions that are not within their current class and scope of practice; or
- Knowingly give false or misleading information to the registrar when they apply to be entered in the register, or in their annual report.

Administrative penalties can also be imposed on local governments and other local authorities if they:

- Allow or require an unqualified building official to make Code compliance decisions;
- Require a building official to make Code compliance decisions that are not within their current class/scope of practice.

#### The Registrar and the Register

The registrar is the person designated by the Minister to maintain the register of qualified building officials.

The register is the official list of qualified building officials kept by the registrar.



Situations in which an administrative penalty could be applied include:

- A building official has not completed their continuing professional development requirement and has been removed from the register, but continues to make Code compliance decisions.
- A local government knowingly allows a building official qualified at building official level 1 class to make Code compliance decisions regarding a complex commercial building that should be made by a building official qualified at building official level 3 class.

<b>Penalties a Building Official Can Receive: Monetary or Administrative</b>	<b>Penalties a Local Government Can Receive: Monetary Only</b>
<b>Monetary:</b> Not to exceed \$10,000, as set by regulation – to be paid by the building official	<b>Monetary:</b> Not to exceed \$10,000, as set by regulation – to be paid by the local government
<b>Administrative:</b> Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Suspension as a qualified building official</li> <li>▪ Removal from the register</li> <li>▪ Permanent ban on being entered in the register</li> </ul>	<b>Administrative:</b> Not applicable

The registrar will investigate whether a penalty should be issued if the registrar receives a complaint about a building official or local government’s actions.

Before issuing an administrative penalty, the registrar must consider:

- Previous enforcement actions for contraventions of a similar nature by the building official or the local government;
- The gravity and magnitude of the contravention;
- Whether the contravention was repeated or continuous;
- Whether the contravention was deliberate;
- Any economic benefit derived by the building official or the local government from the contravention; and
- The person's efforts to correct the contravention.

The registrar cannot impose an administrative penalty if the building official or local government can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the registrar that due diligence was exercised to prevent the contravention.

Administrative penalties can be appealed. If a building official or local government receives a penalty they feel is unwarranted, they can first ask the registrar for what is called a *reconsideration*—an informal type of appeal. After the reconsideration, if the penalty remains, a formal appeal can be made to the Safety Standards Appeal Board. The registrar sets the procedure for requesting a reconsideration, while the Safety Standards Appeal Board sets the procedure for making a formal appeal to the Board.

The registrar ([www.boabc.org](http://www.boabc.org)) and the Safety Standards Appeal Board ([www.gov.bc.ca/safetystandardsappealboard](http://www.gov.bc.ca/safetystandardsappealboard)) have more information about administrative penalties and the appeals procedures and forms.



## 6. How Certified Building and Plumbing Officials Are Affected

As shown in Table 6.1, there are many similarities between being *qualified* under the *Building Act* and being *certified* by the BOABC. Building officials *must* meet the qualification requirements set by the Act by the end of the transition period. Building and plumbing officials can choose to be part of the BOABC’s voluntary certification programs, either during or after the four-year transition period. Building officials seeking further information about the advantages of certification should contact the BOABC ([www.boabc.org](http://www.boabc.org)).

Items	Qualification Requirements Under the <i>Building Act</i>	BOABC Certification Program Requirements
Mandatory or optional	Mandatory	Optional
Be a member of the BOABC	Yes	Yes
Pass Exams	Yes	Yes
Undertake CPD	Yes	Yes
Be entered in the register of qualified building officials	Yes	No <sup>9</sup>
Pay an annual fee to the administrative authority	Yes	No
Submit an annual report to the registrar	Yes	No <sup>10</sup>
Work experience	No	Yes

Building or plumbing officials who hold any up-to-date level of certification under the BOABC’s or the POABC’s certification programs **can request to be entered in the register of qualified building officials at the equivalent class without taking additional training or exams.** For example, a BOABC-certified level 2 building official is eligible to apply to be entered in the register as a qualified building official level 2 class; a POABC-certified level 1 plumbing official is eligible to apply to be entered in the register as a qualified plumbing official level 1 class. If a building official needs or wants to be qualified at a higher or different class than their current certification level, they will need to pass the exams for that class.

At any time during the transition period, certified building officials may apply to be entered in the register of qualified building officials, but to continue to practice, they must ensure they are entered by February 28, 2021 when the transition period ends, even though it is not an explicit certification requirement.

<sup>9</sup> Not required, although the BOABC maintains a separate register of certified building officials.

<sup>10</sup> Not required, though certified members are required to submit an annual report on their CPD to the BOABC as part of being certified.



## 7. Other Qualification Information

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### Out-of-Province ('Extraprovincial') Building Credentials

In the *Building Act*, 'extraprovincial building credential' means an official recognition, conferred by another jurisdiction in Canada, that attests to an individual being qualified or authorized to perform work in that jurisdiction that is the same as or substantially similar to the work of a qualified building official in B.C. Those who hold an extraprovincial building credential of any type (for example, a certification, registration, or license) may become qualified under the *Building Act* at a class equivalent to their existing credentials.

Individuals who hold extraprovincial building credentials must provide the registrar with documentation of any official credential they hold from their province of origin. The registrar will review the information and use it to determine an appropriate class, and will enter them into the register of qualified building officials accordingly.

### Semi-Retired Building Officials Working Part Time

Anyone who works for or on behalf of a local government or other local authority as a building official making Code compliance decisions must be qualified within the specified timeframes, including building officials working part time.

### Building Officials Who Might Retire During the Transition Period

Building officials who might retire during the transition period must meet the membership qualification requirement by August 28, 2017. After that, they do not need to meet any of the other qualification requirements during the remainder of the transition period. However, if a building official works after February 28, 2021, they must meet the other qualification requirements outlined in this guide (i.e., pass exams, apply to be entered in the register, pay the annual fee, and start their CPD).

### Building Officials Working for a Treaty First Nation

Treaty First Nations are local authorities under the *Building Act*. As such, building officials working for them must meet the qualification requirements established in the Act and regulations.

### Contacting the Registrar

To contact the registrar, contact BOABC directly. Website: [www.boabc.org](http://www.boabc.org) | Email: [info@boabc.org](mailto:info@boabc.org) | Phone: (1) 604-270-9516.



## 8. Other Changes Introduced by the *Building Act*

The *Building Act* introduces other changes that building officials should be aware of as they perform their work.

### **Changes to Local Government Authority to Set Technical Building Requirements (Section 5 of the Act)**

A key objective of the *Building Act* is to bring greater consistency to the technical building requirements in force across B.C. To achieve this, the Act gives the Province sole authority to establish technical building requirements. Technical building requirements are the technical requirements for the construction, alteration, repair, and demolition of buildings. A technical building requirement can define the methods, materials, products, assemblies, dimensions, or performance required by the regulation.

Under section 5 of the Act, if a matter is regulated in a provincial building regulation, any requirements for that matter established in local government bylaws will be of no legal force following a two-year transition period that ends December 15, 2017.

The Province recognizes the goal of greater consistency needs to be balanced against reasonable flexibility for local governments to set technical building requirements to meet local needs. Unrestricted matters are one option for providing that flexibility.

**Unrestricted matters** are matters regulated in the BC Building Code (or other provincial building regulations) for which local governments have authority to set their own technical building requirements in bylaws. The Province has identified a small number of matters as unrestricted. Any technical building requirements a local government or other local authority establishes by bylaw will have no legal force after December 15, 2017 unless the requirements are for an unrestricted matter.

The section 5 restrictions do not affect or change local governments' authority to establish, by bylaw, administrative requirements that regulate building construction or requirements for the enforcement of provincial building regulations. For example:

- A bylaw requirement for professional design of certain Part 9 buildings is unaffected by the *Building Act*, as this requirement is considered administrative in nature.
- A requirement for backflow preventer testing after construction is complete is also considered administrative in nature and is unaffected by the Act.

For more information, see Building Act guides B1 (*What Local Governments Need to Know about the Building Act*) and the B1 Appendix (*Changes for Local Governments Under Section 5 of the Building Act*) available online at [www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact](http://www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact).

### **Local Authority Variations (Section 7 of the Act)**

Local governments may request what the *Building Act* calls a 'local authority variation' as a second way of providing flexibility for them to meet local building needs. A local government variation is a building requirement or set of requirements that:

- Differs from requirements in provincial building regulations (primarily the BC Building Code);
- Is requested of the Province by a local authority (including a local government) or group of local authorities;



- Requires the Minister's approval; and
- If approved, is enacted through a provincial building regulation that applies in the jurisdiction(s) of the local authority(ies) making the request.

If a local authority variation is approved for a given jurisdiction(s), building officials in that jurisdiction will have authority to enforce the requirements in the provincial regulation, just as they enforce the requirements in the BC Building Code (also a provincial building regulation).

For more information, see Building Act Guide C1 (*A Guide to Requesting a Local Authority Variation*) and the local authority variation application form available online at [www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact](http://www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact).

### **Variations Under Section 8 of the Act**

Prior to the *Building Act*, there was no formal process for builders or developers to obtain the necessary approvals for innovative buildings that use construction methods or materials in ways the BC Building Code had not anticipated.

Under section 8 of the *Building Act*, an individual (such as a builder or developer) will be able to submit a proposal for an innovative building to the Province. The Province will review the proposal to assess if the proposed building can provide an acceptable level of safety and performance. If the proposal is approved, the Province will enact a site-specific building regulation to authorize construction.

The Province will be developing the application submission and review process, and, as of the writing of this guide, has not yet set a date when it will start accepting variation requests under section 8. Once the Province starts to accept applications, a new section of the *Building Act* Guide will explain section 8 variations and the application process.

### **Changes to the Building Code Appeal Board**

The Building Code Appeal Board hears appeals about the interpretation or application of the BC Building Code. Under the *Building Act*, the Board's role will expand to include appeals of alternative solutions. The Province has not yet set a date for when this change will occur. More information will be available at that time.





## 9. For More Information

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Find out more about the *Building Act*:

**Website:** Regular updates, including other guides in this series, will be posted online as they become available - see [www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact](http://www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact).

**Email:** [Building.Safety@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Building.Safety@gov.bc.ca)

**Mail:** Building and Safety Standards Branch  
Office of Housing and Construction Standards  
PO Box 9844 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, British Columbia  
CANADA - V8W 9T2

### **The New Qualification Requirements**

Questions for BOABC about the new qualification requirements, or questions for the registrar, should be directed to:

The Building Officials' Association of BC (BOABC)  
Suite 145 - 10451 Shellbridge Way  
Richmond, British Columbia  
CANADA - V6X 2W8  
Phone: 604-270-9516  
Email: [info@boabc.org](mailto:info@boabc.org)  
Website: [www.boabc.org](http://www.boabc.org)



## 10. Glossary of Terms

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**Administrative Authority:** The administrative authority refers to the Building Officials' Association of BC (BOABC) and their role in administering the building official qualification requirements on behalf of the Province.

**Advanced Plumbing System:** Advanced plumbing system means a plumbing system that:

- a. is used to drain or vent acid or corrosive wastes, or
- b. contains a bedpan washer, trade waste system, vent stack or yoke vent.

**Alternative Solution:** 'Alternative solution' replaces the term 'equivalency' used in the 1998 BC Building Code. Code users may propose alternative solutions, or alternative ways of meeting BC Building Code requirements. These proposals require local authority approval.

**BC Building Code:** The BC Building Code includes the BC Plumbing Code. This Code applies to the construction of new residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings as well as to alterations, additions to and demolition of existing buildings. It sets minimum standards for health, safety, fire and structural protection, accessibility, energy efficiency, protection from water and sewer damage, and water efficiency. The BC Building Code is the principal provincial building regulation.

**Building Act:** Enacted by the Province in 2015, the *Building Act* is British Columbia's first Act dedicated solely to building and construction.

**Building Regulation:** A provincial regulation made under section 3 of the *Building Act*. Building regulations generally include a number of building requirements. The principal building regulation is the BC Building Code.

**Class and Scope of Practice:** Class refers to the different types and levels of expertise for which a building official may be qualified under the *Building Act*. Scope refers to the matters about which a qualified building official may make decisions, and varies by class.

**Letter of Assurance:** Letters of Assurance are uniform, mandatory documents intended to clearly identify the responsibilities of key individuals in Part 3 building projects, and in some aspects of Part 9 building projects, in the BC Building Code.

**Local Authority:** Under the *Building Act*, local authority means any of the following bodies that have authority to enforce the BC Building Code (and other provincial building regulations):

- a. A municipality;
- b. A regional district;
- c. The Nisga'a Lisims Government;
- d. A treaty First Nation;
- e. The board of governors of the University of British Columbia; and



f. Any other authority prescribed by provincial regulation.

**Part 3 Buildings:** Buildings regulated under Part 3 of the BC Building Code. Part 3 buildings are sometimes called ‘complex.’

**Part 9 Buildings:** Buildings regulated under Part 9 of the BC Building Code.

**Qualified Building Official:** A qualified building official is a person who is qualified as a building official under section 11 of the *Building Act* and is listed in the register of qualified building officials.

**Register:** Per section 12 of the Act, the register is an official list of individuals who are qualified as building officials under the *Building Act*. The list is maintained by the registrar.

**Registrar:** Per section 12 of the Act, the registrar is an individual, designated by the Minister, who maintains the register of qualified building officials.

**Technical Building Requirements** (also referred to as building requirements): Technical building requirements are the technical requirements for the construction, alteration, repair, and demolition of buildings. A requirement can define the methods, materials, products, assemblies, dimensions, or performance required by the regulation. Building requirements can be found in the BC Building Code (a provincial regulation) and other provincial building regulations.

**Unrestricted Matter:** A matter regulated in the BC Building Code (or other provincial building regulations) for which local governments have authority to set their own requirements in bylaws. Unrestricted matters are listed in the Building Act General Regulation.

**Variation:** Under sections 7 and 8 of the *Building Act*, a variation is a technical building requirement that differs from the requirements in the BC Building Code (or other provincial building regulations).



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:  
[WWW.GOV.BC.CA/BUILDINGACT](http://WWW.GOV.BC.CA/BUILDINGACT)