



## IAS NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

December 4, 2013

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### **Kelowna Becomes First Canadian Municipality to Earn IAS Building Department Accreditation**

The [city of Kelowna](#), British Columbia is the first Canadian municipality to achieve accreditation of its building department from the International Accreditation Service (IAS). The IAS accreditation demonstrates that the city's Development Service Department Building and Permitting Branch (KBPB) uses best practices in its plan review, permitting, and inspection services.

"The city of Kelowna places a major emphasis on customer service and technical innovation. Achieving the IAS Certificate of Accreditation is a gratifying confirmation that our staff are working at a very high standard," said Kelowna Mayor Walter Gray.

Kelowna is home to more than 118,500 people and is part of the Central Okanagan Regional District, which has a population of about 167,000. The KBPB is responsible for conducting permitting, plan review, and inspections in accordance with the British Columbia Building Code (BCBC) and Kelowna's Building Bylaw.

"This achievement confirms that we are meeting our council and corporate priorities to operate under best practices," said KBPB Director Mo Bayat. "We believe that the accreditation takes Kelowna one step closer to meeting our mission objectives to lead the development of a safe, vibrant, and sustainable city. I am very proud to work with such a caring, dynamic and forerunning team to raise the bar as the first Canadian accredited building department."

Kelowna's accreditation is based on IAS Accreditation Criteria for Building Departments in British Columbia, Canada (AC475). The program was developed following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the [Building Officials Association of British Columbia](#) (BOABC) and IAS on Nov. 3, 2011 at the [International Code Council](#) Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona. The MOU was an agreement to work together on developing a formal plan to introduce the IAS accreditation program to building departments in British Columbia. IAS delivered a training to interested building departments and stakeholders on the accreditation process in January 2012. Mo Bayat attended that class and having observed the benefits of accreditation, volunteered to have his department be the alpha client for AC475.

As part of the IAS Building Department Accreditation Program, IAS assessed Kelowna's building department across four fields of enforcement—building health and life safety, natural gas, plumbing, and mechanical.

A pre-evaluation was conducted in April 2013 and the full evaluation was conducted in August 2013. During the full evaluation, an IAS evaluation team observed work activities in the department's offices, reviewed documents and policies, evaluated in-house permitting software and interviewed department customers, staff, and community officials.

The evaluators were particularly impressed with KBPB's permit review process. KBPB uses a team concept whereby a plan checker, building inspector, and plumbing and gas inspector are assigned to the same geographic area. The building inspector coordinates with the plumbing and gas inspector prior to framing and final inspections. IAS evaluators believe KBPB's permit assessment process is a candidate for best practice in other building departments in North America.

The IAS team also reviewed KBPB's field practices to appraise performance of the municipality's inspection process, and found that the inspection staff was consistent in their application of the applicable codes and standards. KBPB ensures that there is an inspection supervisor available during the day to provide assistance to the inspection staff for technically complex inspection and procedural code questions. Supervisor availability was also observed in the morning prior to the inspectors going into the field. During inspection, the inspection staff provides guidance to customers, regarding the

next step in the process and offers advice on any technical challenges that they foresee for the project.

“I’m particularly impressed with the efficient workflow and communication protocols put in place within the KBPB organization,” said IAS President Chuck Ramani. “These exceptional business processes translate well to external stakeholders who described KBPB as a customer-focused and solution-oriented department.”

Following resolution of the findings from the August 2013 full evaluation, the IAS Accreditation Review Committee granted accreditation to the city of Kelowna in November 2013. The IAS Certificate of Accreditation ([BDA-145](#)) may be viewed on the IAS website ([www.iasonline.org](http://www.iasonline.org)).

A subsidiary of the International Code Council, IAS provides an independent assessment and verification that building departments meet the requirements of an internationally recognized accreditation program. IAS accredits building departments and building department service providers, fire prevention and life safety departments, special inspection agencies, product certification agencies, inspection programs for metal building manufacturers, fabricator inspection programs, testing and calibration laboratories, inspection agencies, training agencies, curriculum developers, and field evaluation bodies. A recognized accreditation body since 1975, IAS is a nonprofit, public benefit corporation. IAS is one of the leading accreditation bodies in the United States and a signatory to several international mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs).

For more information about IAS or the Building Department Accreditation Program, visit [www.iasonline.org](http://www.iasonline.org) or call 1-866-427-4422.

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**Photo Caption:**

The city of Kelowna Building Department was recognized as the first building department in Canada to achieve IAS Accreditation, during a presentation at the BOABC Fall Education Conference, November 27<sup>th</sup>, at the Vancouver Airport Marriott Hotel.

**Individuals in Photo:**

City of Kelowna representatives Walter Grey, Mayor, Mo Bayat, Development Services Director, Doug Patan, Building and Permitting Branch Manager, Binder Thind, Plan Checker / Building Inspector, Marc Vere, Plan Checker / Building Inspector, Jeremy Frick, Plan Checker / Building Inspector, Terry Kowal, Building, Plumbing and Gas Supervisor, Harvey Spittal, Building Inspector, Rose Hughes, Planning Technician is holding the plaque. IAS representatives Chuck Ramani, President, Preet Bassi, Building Department Accreditation Program Manager. BOABC representatives Manjit Sohi, President, and Richard Bushey, Executive Director.