



Scopes of Practices

Building and Plumbing Officials

November 18, 2025

Promoting Building Safety and Professionalism



Disclaimer

This presentation is conceptual and for informal educational purposes only. The presenters and association takes no responsibility for application of any concepts or interpretations in this presentation to specific projects. The information presented does not constitute legal advice.

The slides must not be considered complete or exhaustive. Code provisions have been generally represented and may not reflect all exceptions.



Territorial Acknowledgement



Agenda

- Background on the Building Act
- Regulated Occupation & Qualification Requirements
- Exempt Building Professionals
- Building Official in Training
- Compliance Decisions
- Professionalism
- Administrative Penalties
- Legislated Scopes of Practice



Building Act background

Following the “leaky condo” crisis the province engaged in a series of industry stakeholder consultations known as the *Modernization Strategy* (2007-14), to find ways to enhance the professionalism, efficiency and consistency within the building industry. [Enforcement of the BC Building Code and Related Issues – 2007](#)

The results of the consultation proposed several industry changes including two discussion papers - [Modern Building Regulatory System](#) and Certification of Local Government Building Officials



Building Act background

Some of the major findings and recommendations within these documents included:

- consistent interpretation of the Building Code on a province-wide basis to ensure the construction of safe buildings;
- more information to develop a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all the parties involved in the building process;
- provision of binding province-wide interpretations of the Building Code;
- provision of bulletins to assist in interpretations;
- expansion of the scope and application of Letters of Assurance; and
- increased use of specialists and professional associations in matters such as Alternative Solutions



Building Act background

There was also further work needed on other related issues, such as:

- legislative definition of roles and responsibilities; and
- training of trades for competencies.

The Modernization Working Group led to the drafting of the Building Act and the Building Official Qualification Working Group led to the drafting of the “Scopes of Practice”.



Building Act background

The Building Official Qualification Working Group focused on:

In-Scope:

- Establishing criteria to establish qualification levels for building and plumbing officials Qualification of code knowledge only as opposed to (exams + experience) as required for BOABC certification.
- Established the 03 levels for Building Officials based on Part 3 vs Part 9 of the Code, however plumbing was nuanced based on use and complexity of a project.
- Allowed for some existing processes such as plumbing officials review of storm and foundation drainage systems as outlined within BCBC.
- Established exemptions for non-building officials – Reg. Professionals, Safety Officers and Fire Inspectors

Out of Scope:

- Not dictating how local governments process permits, enforcement and fees structure development.



Building Act background

As a result, the province passed the Building Act (2015), the first Act in B.C. dedicated solely to building and construction.

Under the Act:

- The Province has sole authority to set technical building requirements
- Local governments have some flexibility to set additional requirements (unrestricted matters)
- There are standard qualification requirements for building officials

Note also the [Building Act General Regulation](#) (BAGR) - more developed outline.

- Refer to **Building Act** - Part 3 — Building Officials - Section 11 (2)... by **regulation**,

However, this legislation should not be confused with the [Building Officials' Association Act \(1997\)](#), which was designed to assist in the development, maintenance, and improvement of building regulations, promote uniform interpretation and enforcement, and enhance the knowledge and skills of its members



Responsibilities of Local Authorities

10(2) A local authority must not allow or require a person to decide on behalf of the local authority whether a matter conforms to a building regulation, unless

- (a) the person is a qualified building official and the matter is within the person's current scope of practice as listed in the register, or
- (b) the person is an exempt building professional.



Responsibilities of Persons

10(3)A person must not decide on behalf of a local authority whether a matter conforms to a building regulation*, unless

- (a) the person is a qualified building official and the matter is within the person's current scope of practice as listed in the register, or
- (b) the person is an exempt building professional.

*Is someone checking for "completeness" vs "correctness"

As an example, a building clerk may accept a Letter of Assurance and date stamp it, but the review of the information on the LofA is to be verified by a qualified official.



Qualification Requirements

What it takes to become a **qualified code** official:

- Becoming a Building or Plumbing Official:
 - Member of the Association
 - Pass the required qualification exams
 - Apply for qualification to BOABC
 - Pay the annual registration fee
 - Be entered into the registry of qualified officials on the BOABC website
- Maintaining Qualification:
 - Be a member in good standing
 - Complete ongoing professional development (10 points/year)
 - Submit an annual report



Exempt Building Professionals

Part 3 - Division 1 — Exempt Building Professionals (BAGR)

- Members of professional Association
 - Architects - AIBC
 - Engineers - EGBC
- Prescribed class of persons - Other building professionals
 - individuals appointed under section 11 [safety officers] of the Safety Standards Act by a local authority, (gas and electrical)
 - 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
 - individuals retained as employees or independent contractors by a local authority to act as a building official responsible for plumbing (fire suppression)



Building Official In-Training

- Meet requirements of **Building Act General Regulation:**
 - Employed by local authority
 - Have a training plan
 - Make reports every 6 months
- Have the same scope of practice as a qualified building official
 - No legislated limits (e.g. review of alternative solutions, stop work orders)
 - No requirement for formal supervision



Compliance Decisions

- Determine whether a matter conforms with the BC Building Code (includes alternative solutions)
- Unqualified individuals should not pass their assessments to qualified code officials who accept these assessments without further review
- Typical 'compliance decisions'
 - Accepting or rejecting a building plan based on conformance to building regs
 - Rejecting a permit application for non-compliance with building regs
 - Conducting a site inspection and determining 'pass,' 'fail,' or noting deficiencies
 - Issuing a building permit
 - Issuing an occupancy permit



Compliance Decision

- Activities that may not represent a compliance decision:
 - Determining whether a permit for work is required under bylaw
 - Determining building permit fees
 - Receiving a letter of assurance for review by a qualified building official
- Does not stop qualified code officials from being mentored or seeking advice



Code of Ethics

- Membership in Good Standing;
- Code of Ethics for Building and Plumbing Officials:
<https://boabc.org/about/code-of-ethics/>



Administrative Penalties

- Applies to both persons and local authorities
 - Suspension or permanent ban from register
 - Fines of up to \$10,000
- *Building Act: 23(3)* Before the registrar imposes an administrative penalty on a person, the registrar must consider the following:
 - (a) previous enforcement actions for contraventions of a similar nature by the person;
 - (b) the gravity and magnitude of the contravention;
 - (c) whether the contravention was repeated or continuous;
 - (d) whether the contravention was deliberate;
 - (e) any economic benefit derived by the person from the contravention;
 - (f) the person's efforts to correct the contravention
- Registrar reconsideration
- Appeal to Safety Standards Appeal Board



Legislated Scopes of Practice – Building Officials

- [Building Act General Regulation](#) (for Building see table 1)
- [What Building and Plumbing Officials Need to Know about the Building Act](#) (see pages 8 and 9)



Building Official Qualified Level 1 vs. Level 2

Paragraph (b): a Part 9 *building* classified as a *Group C major occupancy* that does not contain

- i. a *dwelling unit* above another *dwelling unit*, unless one of the *dwelling units* is a *secondary suite**,
- ii. a *firewall*, or
- iii. a *separate basement*;

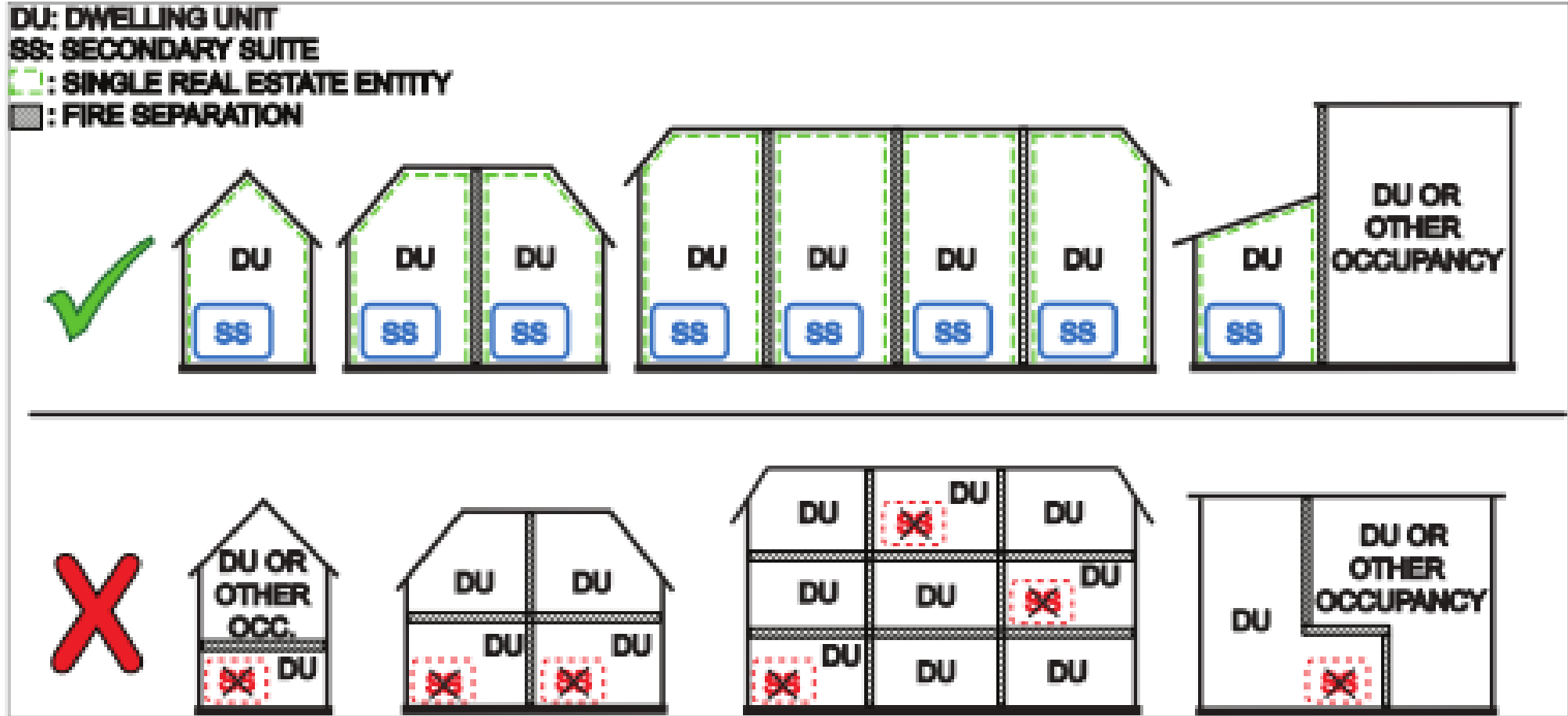
Paragraph (b) includes these Part 9 residential buildings:

- Single family dwelling
- Single family dwelling with secondary suite
- Side-by-side duplex
- Custodial, convalescent, and residential care homes (See Article 9.10.2.2., Division B)
- Motel with no unit above any other unit
- Row house or row townhouse - any number of houses, side-by-side, but limited to 600 m² in total building area, where each house may include a secondary suite

NB. Buildings falling within Paragraph (b) must not include a firewall



Building Official Qualified Level 1 vs. Level 2





Building Official Qualified Level 1 vs. Level 2

<p>Paragraph (c): a Part 9 <i>building</i>, other than a <i>farm building</i>, that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. is a <i>detached garage</i>, or <i>accessory building</i>, that serves a <i>dwelling unit</i> in a <i>building</i> described in paragraph (b), ii. is located on the same property as that <i>building</i>, and iii. does not contain a <i>separate basement</i>; 	<p>Paragraph (c) includes these Part 9 accessory buildings on the same property as and serving a house, side-by-side or up/down duplex, row house or row townhouse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Garage (for one or more vehicles) and ▪ Pool storage, maintenance, office, workshop, studio, salon, etc.
<p>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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. is one <i>storey</i> in <i>building height</i>, and ii. does not contain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. more than one <i>suite</i>, or B. a <i>separate basement</i>. 	<p>Paragraph (d) includes these Part 9, one storey, low- or medium-hazard industrial buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshop ▪ Storage garage ▪ Repair garage ▪ Barn (other than a 'farm building' as the BC Building Code defines it)



Building Official Qualification Level 3

- All Building Types:
 - Including buildings under Level 1 and 2;
 - Buildings to which Part 3 of the BC Building Code would apply as per Division A 1.3.3.2.(1)



Legislated Scopes of Practice – Plumbing Officials

- [Building Act General Regulation](#) (Schedule 1, Table 2)
- [What Building and Plumbing Officials Need to Know about the Building Act](#) (Table 3.2, Page 10)



Plumbing Classes (Table 3.2 - Section B2 of the Building Act Guide)

- Level 1 Plumbing Officials are limited to deciding whether a matter conforms to a building regulation as they relate to:
 - plumbing systems
 - foundation drainage
 - hydronic heating systems;

of the following buildings: (continued next slide)

- Note that decisions relating to fire protection systems made by a building official responsible for plumbing is not limited by the Building Act General Regulation, Section 9 (2) (c).



Plumbing Classes (Table 3.2 - Section B2 of the Building Act Guide)

- Level 1 Limitations (cont'd):
 - can make decisions on all Part 9 buildings
 - new Part 3 buildings, other than a Group B, Division 2 major occupancy, that
 - Is no more than 4 storeys in building height, and
 - Does not contain an advanced plumbing system or specified grease interceptor;
- an existing Part 3 building that is no more than 4 storeys in building height, if the work does not involve
 - a change in occupancy to a Group B, Division 2 major occupancy, or
 - An advanced plumbing system or specified grease interceptor



Plumbing Classes (Table 3.2 - Section B2 of the Building Act Guide)

- Level 1 limitations further explained;
 - treatment occupancies excluded (which leads to the bedpan washer exclusion below),
 - five or more stories in building height (which leads to the vent stack exclusion below)
 - buildings containing an advanced plumbing system which means:
 - a plumbing system that is used to drain or vent acid or corrosive wastes, or
 - contains a bedpan washer, trade waste system (commonly found in large grocery stores, see BCIC Interpretation 98-0076 for drawing), vent stack or yoke vent, or
 - a plumbing system that contains a circuit vent that serves more than 8 fixtures
 - Two dwelling units or row houses served by non-potable water systems
 - a plumbing system that contains a grease interceptor with a flow rate greater than 189 L/min



Thank you! Questions?