

May 24, 2017

## **AIBC-APEGBC Member Advisory – Revised Letters of Assurance in the BC Building Code**

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This member advisory is issued to members and licensees of the Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC) and Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC (APEGBC) regarding Ministerial Order M158, issued April 7, 2017, by the Hon. Rich Coleman, Minister of Natural Gas Development and Minister Responsible for Housing and Deputy Premier, which amends the BC Building Code, effective immediately. This advisory concerns revisions to Letters of Assurance, and is related to the May 17, 2017, [Information Bulletin \(No. B17 – 01\)](#) released by the Building and Safety Standards Branch.

The following is the text of the formal announcement, issued April 11, 2017 by Andrew Pape-Salmon, P.Eng., Executive Director, Building and Safety Standards Branch (BSSB) regarding the changes to the BC Building Code:

“As a technical regulation, the BC Energy Step Code is a voluntary compliance path within the BC Building Code (Subsections 9.36.6. and 10.2.3. of Division B). It establishes progressive performance targets (or steps) that support market transformation from the current energy-efficiency requirements in the BC Building Code to net zero energy ready buildings by 2032. The transition to net zero ready buildings by 2032 is a key commitment of the Province’s Climate Leadership Plan.

The BC Energy Step Code only applies to new construction of the following building types:

- Residential (Part 9) – Province-wide.
- Multi-unit residential and commercial (business and personal services and mercantile) – only in climate zone 4 (i.e., Lower Mainland, southern Vancouver Island, southern Okanagan).

Building owners may voluntarily build to the requirements in the BC Energy Step Code. Incentives are available for achieving higher standards.

In addition to being a voluntary standard for builders, the BC Energy Step Code may also be referenced in local government bylaws and policies, enabling province-wide consistency of energy efficiency requirements across jurisdictions and replacing a patchwork of varying requirements. On December 15, 2017, section 5 of the *Building Act* will render local government bylaws with technical building requirements of no legal force, unless the bylaws concern what the *Building Act* calls ‘unrestricted matters.’ Local governments wishing to require higher energy-efficiency standards than those in the BC Building Code may now do so in a consistent and predictable way using the BC Energy Step Code.

Two matters have been added to the Building Act General Regulation's unrestricted matters list to support local government use of the BC Energy Step Code: the conservation of energy, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. These two matters are unrestricted with two conditions:

- Local governments may not require buildings to be constructed except in conformance to a step in sections 9.36.6.3. or 10.2.3.3. of Division B of the British Columbia Building Code, and
- Local governments may not modify the requirements or impose requirements in addition to those in sections 9.36.6. or 10.2.3. of Division B of the British Columbia Building Code.”

The changes noted above include revisions to the Letters of Assurance, specifically Schedule B architectural item 1.25, mechanical item 3.9, plumbing item 4.10 and electrical item 6.10, and in Schedule C-A, the role of the coordinating registered professional, and the title. As these revisions are effective immediately, AIBC and APEGBC advise members/licensees to use the new Letters of Assurance on any project for building permit applications after April 7, 2017.

Members/licensees should be aware that the AIBC Regulatory Coordination Committee and APEGBC Building Codes Committee have identified some issues with these letters, which have been brought to the attention of the BSSB. As a result, the BSSB is supportive of AIBC and APEGBC providing instruction to their respective members for the use of the letters until they can be amended by a future ministerial order.

On an interim basis, members/licensees are advised to annotate the new schedules, until updated Letters of Assurance are issued and formally endorsed by APEGBC and AIBC.

Guidance from AIBC and APEGBC on the appropriate annotations that can be made to the new Letters of Assurance in the interim is as follows:

1. Schedule B, architectural item 1.25:
  - Delete “testing or confirmation”
  - Add “testing and/or confirmation”
2. Schedule B, mechanical item 3.9:
  - Delete “Building envelope, testing/confirmation of Part 10 requirements”
  - Add “Mechanical systems, testing and/or confirmation of Part 10 requirements”
3. Schedule B, plumbing item 4.10:
  - Delete “testing/confirmation”
  - Add “testing and/or confirmation”
4. Schedule B, electrical item 6.10:
  - Delete “testing/confirmation”
  - Add “testing and/or confirmation”
5. Schedule C-A, in the title:
  - Delete “British Columbia Building Code 2017”
  - Add “British Columbia Building Code 2012”.

AIBC and APEGBC will be providing guidance on the specific roles and responsibilities of Registered Professionals under Items 1.25, 3.9, 4.10, and 6.10 in Schedule B prior to December 15, 2017, when local governments wishing to implement the BC Energy Step Code are

expected to do so.

The new Letters of Assurance will be available on the BSSB webpage. In the interim, should you need immediate access, please see [apeg.bc.ca/guidelines](http://apeg.bc.ca/guidelines). If you have any questions about this advisory, please contact:

**AIBC**

Maura Gatensby Architect AIBC  
Practice Advisor

[mgatensby@aibc.ca](mailto:mgatensby@aibc.ca)

604.683.8588, ext. 334

1.800.667.0753 ext. 334

**APEGBC**

Peter Mitchell, P.Eng.  
Director, Professional Practice, Standards and  
Development

[mitchell@apeg.bc.ca](mailto:mitchell@apeg.bc.ca)

604.412.4853

1.888.430.4035 ext. 4853