



BC Energy Step Code

The Province has committed to taking incremental steps to increase energy-efficiency requirements in the BC Building Code to make buildings net-zero energy ready by 2032. The BC Energy Step Code--a part of the BC Building Code--supports that effort.

What is it? The BC Energy Step Code is a voluntary provincial standard enacted in April 2017 that provides an incremental and consistent approach to achieving more energy-efficient buildings that go beyond the requirements of the base BC Building Code. It does so by establishing a series of measurable, performance-based energy-efficiency requirements for construction that builders can choose to build to, and communities may voluntarily choose to adopt in bylaws and policies.

Why do we have it? In addition to supporting long-term improvements in energy efficiency in the BC Building Code, the BC Energy Step Code will improve [the consistency of building regulations](#) in the Province. The Energy Step Code is a single provincial standard that replaces the patchwork of different green building standards that have been required or encouraged by local governments in the past. This will allow local governments to continue to play a leadership role in improving energy efficiency, while providing a single standard for industry and build capacity over time.

How does it work? The BC Energy Step Code takes a new, performance-based approach rather than the traditional prescriptive approach. The BC Energy Step Code does not specify how to construct a building, but identifies an energy-efficiency target that must be met and lets the designer/builder decide how to meet it.

To comply with the BC Energy Step Code, builders must use energy modelling software and on-site testing to demonstrate that both their design and the constructed building meet the requirements of the BC Energy Step Code. The new standard empowers builders to pursue innovative, creative, cost-effective solutions, and allows them to incorporate leading-edge technologies as they come available.

The BC Energy Step Code also supports consumer choice, by allowing designers and builders to use natural gas, electricity, or other energy sources for their project without imposing a penalty on this decision. This fuel-neutral approach provides builders with the flexibility to make energy-efficient buildings using all available technologies.

Is it required? The BC Energy Step Code is currently a voluntary standard builders across B.C. can use. In addition, local governments can choose to require or encourage builders to meet one or more steps of the BC Energy Step Code as an alternative to the BC Building Code's prescriptive requirements.

When does it take effect? The BC Energy Step Code came into force in April 2017 so builders have the option of building to the requirements in the Energy Step Code at any time. Local governments can set bylaw requirements for builders to meet one or more steps effective December 15, 2017 (when local governments' [authority to set technical building requirements by bylaw](#) will change under the Building Act).

Energy Step Code Council

The Province has established the multi-stakeholder [Energy Step Code Council](#) to support local governments and industry to implement the BC Energy Step Code. The Energy Step Code Council will actively support the implementation with research, training, communications, and policy guidance for stakeholders.

For More Information

- Read the [How it Works](#) page
- Find local government best practice guides, code content, and other helpful material on the [resources page](#), and the [presentations and webinars page](#)
- Check the website regularly for new information, and educational and training materials

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