

Updated Energy Efficiency Requirements for New Homes

This handout provides designers, contractors, and energy advisors with information on an update to the City’s Construction Regulation Bylaw. This update changes the minimum energy efficiency requirements for new Part 9 residential buildings (single family houses, coach houses, duplexes, townhouses, etc.) and comes into effect on November 1st, 2023.

New Requirements

As of November 1st, 2023, the City’s Construction Regulation Bylaw will require Building Permit applications for new Part 9 residential buildings to demonstrate compliance with one of two Energy Step Code and Zero Carbon Step Code compliance options:

Option	Energy Step Code Step	Zero Carbon Step Code
Option 1	Step 4	EL-3
Option 2	Step 5	EL-1

New Submission Requirements

Building Permit applications processed on or after November 1st, 2023 must include the Design Verification Report and the applicable portion of the Provincial BC Step Code Compliance Checklist – Performance Paths For Part 9 Buildings (Excel Sheet), further details and up-to-date application information, please visit the City’s building permit webpage at cnv.org/permits.

Old Submission Requirements

Complete Building Permit applications accepted between July 1st, 2021 and October 31st, 2023 for Part 9 residential buildings are required to demonstrate compliance with one of two Energy Step Code compliance options:

1. Step 3, where all mechanical systems in the building are able to be classified as a *low carbon energy system*.
2. Step 5, where the mechanical systems in the building are not able to be classified as a *low carbon energy system*.

On November 1st, 2023 these requirements will be replaced by the new requirements listed above.

Background

The BC Building Code defines the minimum level of performance for buildings in the areas of life safety, building safety, health, accessibility, and energy efficiency. The [Energy Step Code](#) was introduced in 2017 by the province to provide energy efficiency thresholds for local governments to implement. The City has been a leader in energy efficiency in new construction since adoption

of the step code in 2017. The top step (Step 5) is equivalent to a net-zero energy building, meeting BC's [CleanBC](#) mandate for all buildings by 2032.

In the City, carbon pollution from buildings accounts for 43% of community-wide emissions, with the majority being attributed to natural gas combustion for space heating and domestic hot water. In order to achieve the City's target of zero emissions by 2050, addressing emissions from buildings means reducing the amount of energy used through better constructed buildings, and meeting remaining energy needs with low carbon energy systems. Transitioning to high performance new homes with zero-carbon emission mechanical systems will reduce emissions from the building sector and supports better quality construction, improved comfort, and better indoor air quality.

In 2021, The City implemented low carbon requirements to reduce emissions from building mechanical equipment. The adoption of the province's new Zero Carbon Step Code will align City and provincial low carbon requirements to provide a more consistent regulatory framework for new construction.

Additional Resources

The following online resources may be of assistance:

- [BC Energy Step Code website](#)
- [Province of BC - Energy Efficiency](#)
- [CHBA BC Part 9 Energy Efficiency and Zero Carbon Step Code May 9, 2023 Webinar](#)

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