



Office of Housing and
Construction Standards



What Building and Plumbing Officials Need to Know about the *Building Act*

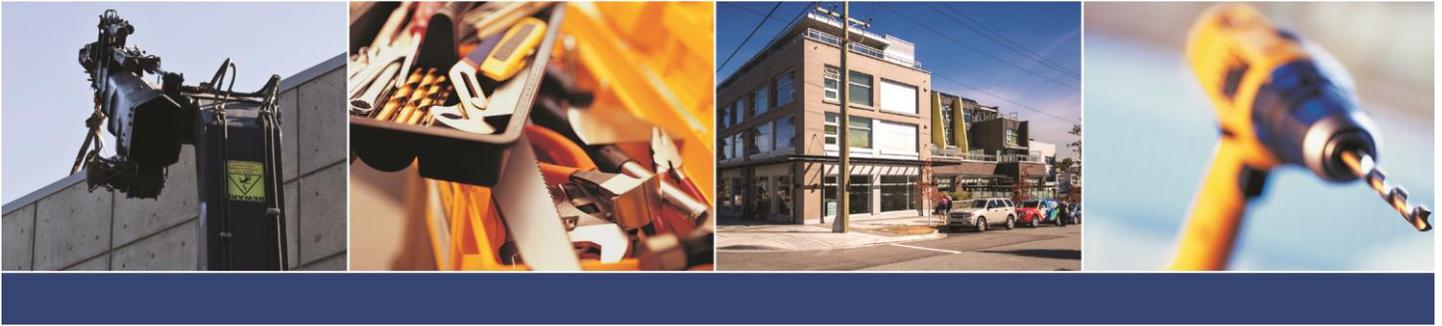
SHORT Section B2 of the *Building Act* Guide

February 2017



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1. About this Guide

In spring 2015, the Province passed the *Building Act*, the first Act dedicated solely to building and construction.

This guide, the short version of the B2 *Building Act* guide, explains how the *Building Act* affects building and plumbing officials, and provides an overview of the new qualification requirements for these occupations. For complete details, please refer to the full B2 guide available [online](#).

This guide may be updated over time; the most current version will always be available on the *Building Act* [website](#). **The information provided here is for guidance only and is not a substitute for provincial legislation. It is not legal advice and should not be relied upon for that purpose.**

2. Introduction: New Qualification Requirements

Under the *Building Act*, building officials (including plumbing officials) will need to be qualified if they work for a local government or any other local authority and make decisions about compliance with the BC Building Code or other provincial building regulations. The *Building Act* marks the first time provincial qualifications have been *required* for these occupations. The new qualification requirements support the professionalism of building officials and will improve consistency in how the BC Building Code is interpreted, applied, and enforced.

In the *Building Act* and in this guide, the term ‘building official’ includes **anyone** who makes a decision for or on behalf of a local government on whether a matter conforms to a provincial building regulation, **regardless of job title**.

To be considered qualified, building officials will have to:

1. Be a **member** in good standing of the Building Officials’ Association of British Columbia (BOABC);
2. **Pass exams** according to the level of their responsibilities;
3. Undertake annual **continuing professional development** (CPD);
4. Be entered in the **register of qualified building officials**; and
5. Pay an **annual fee to the administrative authority** and submit an **annual report** to the registrar.¹

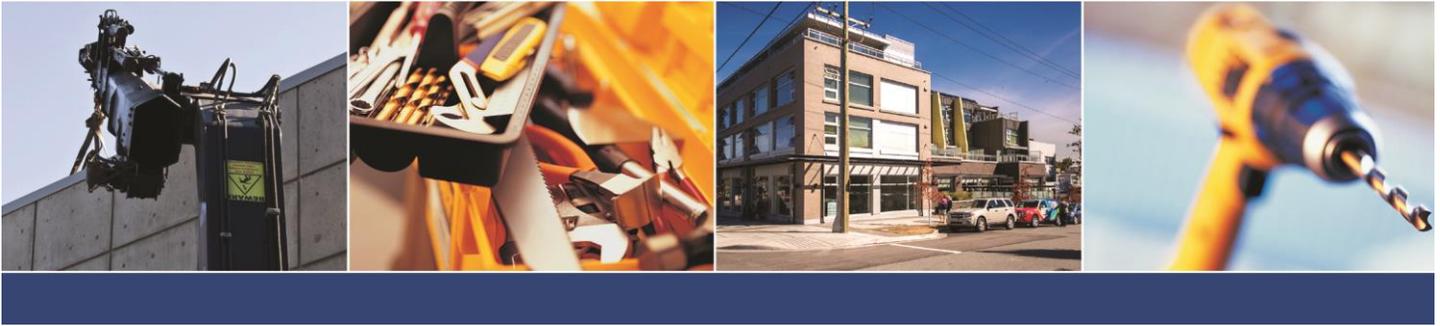
Building officials employed by or under contract to the City of Vancouver **do not** need to meet the qualification requirements as the *Building Act* does not apply in Vancouver.

2.1 When the Qualification Requirements Take Effect

The transition period for the qualification requirements starts on February 28, 2017, when the requirements come into force. From that date, the qualification requirements take effect in two steps over four years:

- **On or before August 28, 2017** (i.e., within six months of February 28, 2017), building officials must become members of the BOABC; and

¹ *Building Act* sections 11 (1) and 13.



- **On or before February 28, 2021** (i.e., within four years of February 28, 2017), building officials must pass the requisite exams for the class/scope of practice at which they work and be entered in the register of qualified building officials.

The annual fee must be paid when a building official is entered into the register. The requirements to earn CPD points and submit an annual report will begin to apply on December 31 of the year a building official is first entered into the register.

2.2 Delegation of Administrative Authority

The *Building Act* enables the Minister who is responsible for the Act to enter into an agreement with an external organization to administer the qualification requirements. The Minister has selected the BOABC to be the administrative authority, due to their existing role as the professional association for building officials, their linkages to the Alliance of Canadian Building Officials' Association (ACBOA), and their expertise in building official education and qualifications. Indeed, many of the qualification requirements under the Act are similar to the requirements in the voluntary certification programs already established by the BOABC for building officials, and by the Plumbing Officials' Association of BC (POABC) for plumbing officials. The BOABC will continue to offer the certification programs (for both building and plumbing officials) after becoming the administrative authority for the building official qualifications established under the *Building Act*.²

3. Who Must be Qualified

Any individual who decides whether a matter conforms to a provincial building regulation on behalf of a local government must be either qualified or exempt from the qualification requirements (see Section 3.2 below). In a decision, an individual exercises informed judgement which typically results in the approval or rejection of:

- An aspect of building plans;
- An application for a building permit or occupancy permit; or
- An aspect of construction that is being reviewed.

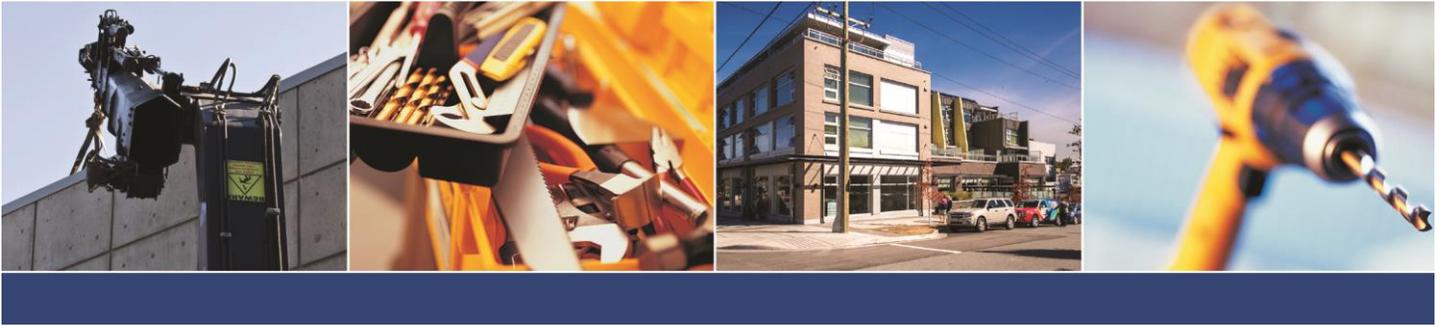
The *Building Act* does not define 'building official.' A building official under the Act could be a plan checker, a building inspector, a plumbing inspector, or even someone working in the fire or any other department within a local government. The need for qualification is based on whether a local government employee or contractor makes decisions about compliance with the BC Building Code or other provincial building regulations; those who do must be qualified, regardless of job title.

Those who make decisions about post-occupancy compliance with the BC Fire Code do not need to meet the qualification requirements for building officials.

What is a provincial building regulation?

A 'provincial building regulation' includes all three Divisions of the BC Building Code, referenced standards, and referenced codes. It also includes any other provincial building regulations, and the standards and codes they reference. A provincial building regulation **does not** include technical or administrative requirements found in local bylaws.

² The Plumbing Officials' Association of British Columbia has passed a resolution to take steps to dissolve as an entity after the qualification requirements come into force in 2017. Once it dissolves, the BOABC will operate the certification program for plumbing officials as well as for building officials.



3.1 Classes of Building Officials and Scopes of Practice

The *Building Act* allows the Minister to establish different classes of building officials with different scopes of practice. Different classes enable different types of expertise to be recognized. Scopes of practice define the limitations, if any, on the matters for which an individual in a specific class may make Code compliance decisions.

The classes are broadly modelled on the levels in the voluntary certification programs administered by the BOABC and the POABC, with some modifications to the scope of practice. Please see the full B2 guide for complete details of the classes and scopes of practice. The Act enables the Minister to specify additional classes if needed. Exam requirements for the classes will be modelled on the exam requirements for the BOABC's and POABC's certification programs.

	Class of Building Official Under the <i>Building Act</i>	BOABC or POABC Certification Level	Exam Requirements for Qualification under the <i>Building Act</i>
Building	Building Level 1 Class	Level One (1) (one and two-family dwellings)	BOABC Level I Exam 1 BOABC Level I Exam 2
	Building Level 2 Class	Level Two (2) (all Part 9 buildings)	BOABC Level II Exam 5 BOABC Level II Exam 6
	Building Level 3 Class	Level Three (3) (all buildings)	BOABC Level III Exam 7 BOABC Level III Exam 8 BOABC Level III Exam 9 BOABC Level III Exam 10
Plumbing	Plumbing Level 1 Class	Level 1 (residential and light commercial construction)	POABC Level 1
	Plumbing Level 2 Class	Level 2 (more complex commercial, industrial and high-rise construction)	POABC Level 2

3.2 Individuals Exempt from the Qualification Requirements

Some individuals are exempt or temporarily exempt from the building official qualification requirements:

- Those registered and licensed as an architect by the Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC).
- Those who are members of and registered as Professional Engineers with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia (APEGBC), or are APEGBC members holding a limited licence whose scope of practice includes consulting on building regulations.
- Those already required to hold qualifications under the *Safety Standards Act*.
- Those making decisions about the fire prevention and response matters, or fire suppression matters, listed in the Building Act General Regulation. This is a temporary exemption pending further work by the Province to develop qualifications for these matters.



4. The Registrar and the Register of Qualified Building Officials

The registrar is the person designated by the Minister to maintain the official list—or register—of who is qualified in B.C. as a building official under the *Building Act*. The Minister has designated Derek Townson, the Executive Director of the BOABC, as the registrar for a five-year term ending February 28, 2022.

4.1 Administrative Penalties

The registrar has authority to impose administrative penalties on building officials and local governments. If imposed, administrative penalties can be appealed, first informally to the registrar and subsequently to the Safety Standards Appeal Board.

5. How Certified Building and Plumbing Officials Are Affected

Building or plumbing officials who hold an up-to-date level of certification under the BOABC's or the POABC's certification programs can request to be entered in the register of qualified building officials at the equivalent class without taking additional training or exams. For example, a BOABC-certified level 2 building official can apply to be entered in the register as a qualified building official level 2 class; a POABC-certified level 1 plumbing official can apply to be entered in the register as a qualified plumbing official level 1 class. If a building or plumbing official needs or wants to be qualified at a higher or different class than their current certification level, they will need to pass the exam(s) for that class.

Practicing building and plumbing officials may apply to be entered in the register of qualified building officials at any time during the transition period, but must ensure they are entered by February 28, 2021 (when the transition period ends).

6. For More Information

Please read the full B2 guide – *What Building and Plumbing Officials Need to Know about the Building Act* – available [online](#).

For *Building Act* questions contact:

Building and Safety Standards Branch
Office of Housing and Construction Standards
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Email: Building.Safety@gov.bc.ca | Website: www.gov.bc.ca/buildingact

For questions about the new qualification requirements or for the registrar, contact:

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Richmond, British Columbia, CANADA - V6X 2W8
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