



# Media Release

March 23, 2023

For immediate release

## Energy Step Code changes for new home construction Step Code 3 required starting May 1

Nelson, BC: Starting May 1, 2023, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK), in accordance with the BC Building Code (BCBC), will require every new Part 9 building (residential and small commercial/industrial) to meet Step 3 of BC's Energy Step Code. The change will ensure new buildings are 20% more energy efficient than an equivalent building constructed to the 2018 Building Code. The move follows the BC Energy Step Code – a standard based on a series of energy efficiency performance targets, or "steps", for new construction and major renovations in the province. The steps 1 to 5 represent increasing levels of performance related to building energy efficiency.

[What is the BC Energy Step Code? Click to watch video.](#)

Currently, all new residences in the RDCK are required to meet Step 1 – enhanced compliance. With the revised code requirements, residences, small commercial and industrial buildings will now be required to meet Step 3, with more complex buildings (Part 3 buildings) required to meet Step 2. This change will not affect existing in-progress building permits, however applications received after May 1, 2023 will need to design and construct new buildings to the new mandatory Step Code requirements. There are plans by the province to further increase the required energy efficiency for new buildings by 40% in 2027 and 80% in 2030.

"The RDCK is committed to helping builders achieve high levels of energy efficiency in construction and lay the foundations for a more sustainable future," said Chris Gainham, RDCK Building Manager. "The performance based approach of the BC Energy Step Code is intended to provide a more flexible approach to building code compliance related to energy efficiency; allowing the market, new materials and methods and the ingenuity of builders and designers, to drive, innovate and achieve higher levels of energy efficiency and sustainability in their projects. Since 2021, builders in the RDCK have had to meet Step 1, and this has provided familiarity with the process, helping to make the transition to a mandatory Step 3 smoother. Builders in the RDCK have shown their readiness in constructing more energy efficient buildings, and have been effective in meeting and regularly exceeding the required Step 1, with many residential builds achieving Steps 3 and 4, and some achieving Step 5. We look forward to working with them as we build and build better."

"There are definitely some hurdles including our aging housing stock, rural context, and the difficulties in achieving required certifications experienced by contractors," said Shari Imada, RDCK Senior Energy Specialist.

“However, this new mandated change in the BCBC will help to provide the environment needed to move the whole building industry to one that is well versed in delivering high performance buildings.”

Further information on the Energy Step Code can be seen at <https://energystepcode.ca/>. For more information on how this change affects an upcoming building permit application, or to find contractor training opportunities, please refer to the information on the RDCK website [www.rdck.ca/building](http://www.rdck.ca/building) or contact the RDCK building department at 250-352-8155 or [blddept@rdck.bc.ca](mailto:blddept@rdck.bc.ca).

*Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit [www.rdck.ca](http://www.rdck.ca).*

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