



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN



BC Energy Step Code

Revised: September 2021

The purpose of this bulletin is to inform staff, building contractors and the general public of the BC Energy Step Code requirements to be in effect January 3rd, 2022 within the Regional District North Okanagan and Member Municipalities.

What is the BC Energy Step Code?

The BC Energy Step Code is a provincial regulation that local governments use to incentivize or require a level of energy efficiency in new construction that goes above and beyond the requirements of the *BC Building Code*. It consists of a series of steps, representing increasing levels of energy-efficiency performance. By gradually adopting one or more steps of the standard, local governments will increase building performance requirements in their communities. The Province of British Columbia has set a goal that all new buildings must reach a net-zero energy ready level of efficiency by 2032; the BC Energy Step Code serves as the policy pathway to reach that goal.

The Regional District North Okanagan submitted an initial notification on August 31st, 2021 to the Energy Step Code Council, informing them that we will be implementing Step 1 of the BC Energy Step Code. This change is to prepare building contractors for the province wide enactment of Step 3 of the BC Energy Step Code, December, 2022.

What Do These Changes Mean?

To achieve the Lower Steps (1-3), building and design professionals and trades can rely on conventional building designs with careful air-sealing practices, and incrementally incorporate some key elements in the design, building envelope, and equipment and systems.

One of the more notable changes, will be the use of an Energy Advisor. They model the design of the house including orientation, window locations and sizes, insulation, exterior wall surface area, solar gain and other factors. Energy advisors play an important role in the BC Energy Step Code and should be consulted with at the initial design phase. This ensures that energy efficiency is built into the design at the beginning. Waiting until the full design is complete, often eliminates more cost effective ways of meeting the requirements. In addition to the initial modeling of the home, they also work with the builder throughout the process. The blower door test is a crucial step in meeting the performance based requirements of the BC Energy Step Code. This tests the real world performance of the air-barrier and ensures it meets the maximum number of air changes an hour. Upon the final inspection an Energy Advisor will ensure the mechanical heating and ventilation equipment aligns with the initial modeling of the house.

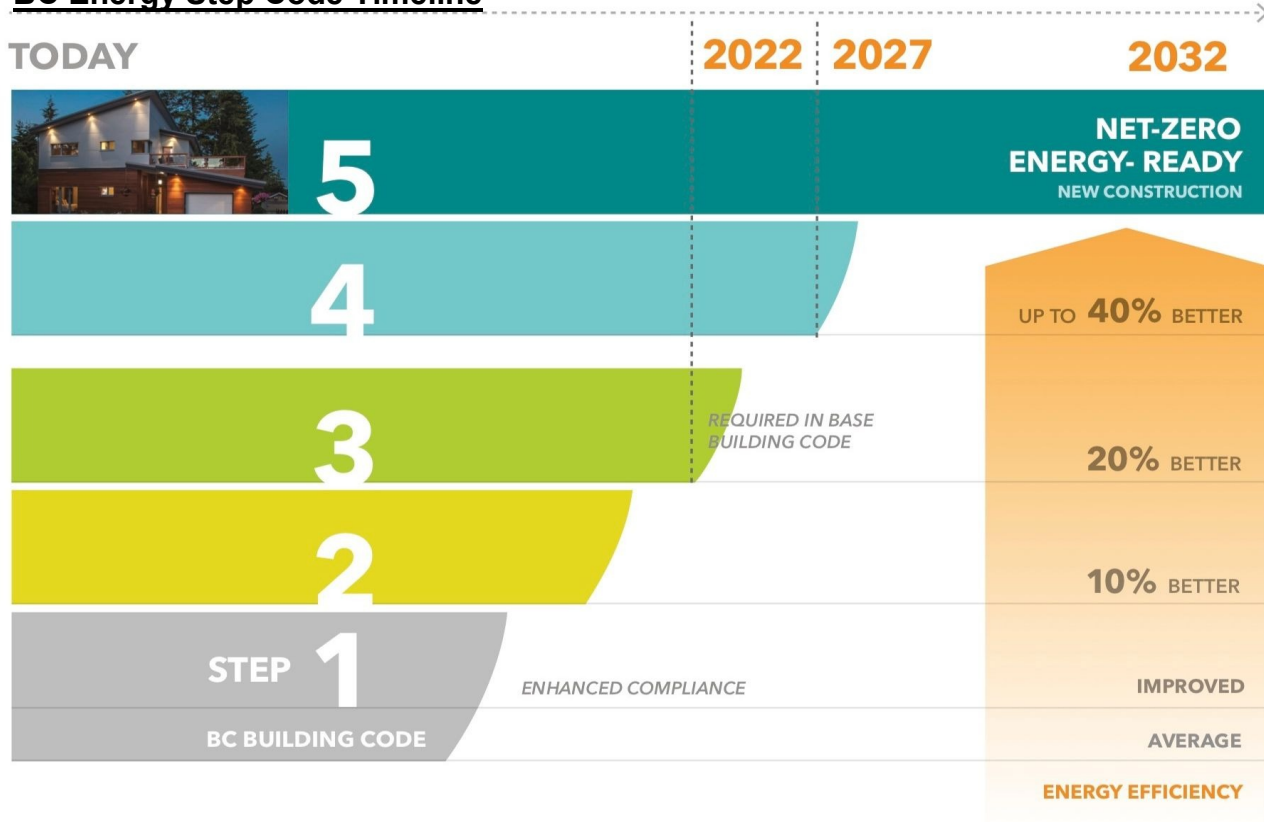
This results in a home that is more energy efficient and cheaper to operate. To help with the upfront costs associated with these changes, BC Hydro, Fortis BC and the Canadian Government have energy efficiency rebate programs. Your Energy Advisor will guide you through the different offers.

For more information please contact the Building Department:

Phone – 250-550-3700

Email – building@rdno.ca

BC Energy Step Code Timeline



Examples of the Energy-Efficient Home

INSIDE THE STEP 3 HOME

Six strategies to boost energy-efficiency performance

BOOST INSULATION

To reduce heat loss, increase insulation in walls, floors, roof, and foundation.

VENTILATE SMARTLY

Bring plenty of fresh air into the home and recover heat from the exhaust air leaving the building.

MIND YOUR MACHINES

Specify efficient appliances, and ensure your heating system will meet – but not exceed – the home's needs.

MINIMIZE THERMAL BRIDGES

A break in your insulation acts like a bridge that carries heat straight out of the house. Take care with corners, junctions, gaps and studs!

SEAL IT UP

Air leaks are heat leaks. Wrap the home tightly, taking care to seal around ducts, pipes, fixtures, and wires that pass through walls, ceilings, and roof.

THINK ABOUT DOORS & WINDOWS

Carefully consider their energy performance, size, and location.