



**CSRD Building Inspection Service
Expansion to Electoral Area C
June, 2018**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do Building Inspections protect public health and safety?

Buildings are complex, particularly when they include plumbing, electrical wiring, and connections to drinking water and septic systems. The *BC Building Code* establishes minimum requirements that are designed to keep occupants safe and healthy. When followed, the requirements help to ensure that buildings:

- are structurally sound, with proper building frames and foundations
- provide adequate fire protection
- address issues concerning radon gas
- provide adequate exits in the event of emergencies
- are equipped with proper plumbing for safe drinking water and liquid waste disposal
- minimize hazards to prevent accidents

All buildings are required to be constructed to the standards of the *BC Building Code*. Only buildings in areas with building inspection, however, are subject to the consistent and high level of oversight required, at key points of the construction process, to ensure that the *Code* is met and safety standards are upheld.

What is Building Inspection?

Building inspection is a service through which local governments regulate the construction of buildings. A property owner who wishes to construct a building in an area with building

inspection is required to obtain, prior to construction beginning, the local government's approval to build. Approval is given in the form of a building permit, for which the property owner must apply. Permits are issued when the local government has confirmed, through its review of the submitted building plans, that the proposed structure complies with the technical standards in the *BC Building Code*, and the planning regulations in the applicable OCP and zoning bylaw.

At various points of the construction process, inspections must be arranged by the property owner with a Building Inspector from the local government. At each inspection, the Inspector confirms that the standards of the *BC Building Code*, and the relevant land use regulations, are indeed being met.

When will the expanded service take effect in Electoral Area C?

CSRD building inspection will apply in Area C in the spring of 2019 (exact date to be announced). The service will be administered in compliance with *CSRD Building Regulation Bylaw No. 660*, which can be viewed at www.csr.bc.ca/services/building-regulationinspection.

Why is there no referendum?

Sometimes when regional district services are established, referendums are used to obtain approval from those who are directly affected by, and required to pay for, the service. The *Local*



Government Act recognizes, however, that referendums are not well-suited to every local government decision. Decisions to regulate the actions of individuals through the establishment of regulatory services such as building inspection are good examples. Regulatory services such as building inspection have important health, safety, economic, environmental and other benefits that are important to the broader community. These services do not require approval through a referendum. Instead, the *Act* enables the Electoral Area Director of the affected areas to consent to establishing the service on behalf of his or her electors.

The Electoral Area Director for Area C will be asked to provide consent to the CSRD building inspection service bylaw on behalf of South Shuswap. The bylaw will then be sent to the Province's Inspector of Municipalities for review and approval.

What is the building permit process?

There are five steps in the full process:

- > *Step 1: Application* — The property owner submits a complete application (including plans and required supporting documents) that details the type of construction, alteration or repair, along with the value of the proposed work. At this time the Building Permit application fee of \$72 is paid.
- > *Step 2: Permit Review* — The application and plans are reviewed by CSRD staff for compliance with the *BC Building Code*, zoning bylaw regulations, and development permit guidelines in the OCP. If a development permit is necessary, the property owner is contacted. Compliance with other agency approval processes (e.g., septic system processes through Interior Health) is also reviewed.
- > *Step 3: Permit Issuance* — Once the review is complete, the property owner is contacted to pick up the permit and pay the total permit fee and security deposit (pursuant to *Building Regulation Bylaw, No. 660*). The permit is required to be posted conspicuously on site,

legible from the road, during the entire construction process. All plans, specifications and supporting documents on which the permit was based, all inspection certificates, and all professional field reviews are to be available on-site during normal working hours.

- > *Step 4: Inspections* — The CSRD performs six (6) on-site building inspection at key points of construction process. Wherever possible, inspections are conducted within 48 hours of being requested by the property owners.
- > *Step 5: Final Occupancy* — Once the final inspection is completed successfully, and all outstanding documentation is submitted, the CSRD issues a Final Occupancy Certificate.

Further information on the building permit process may be obtained from the CSRD Building Department (1.888.248.2773 or 250.832.8194; buildingpermit@csrd.bc.ca).

When is a building permit required?

Any property owner who wishes to undertake construction in Electoral Area C will need to obtain a building permit (and, in most cases, a plumbing permit), prior to commencing construction, once the expanded service takes effect. Building permits are required for most construction, demolition and excavation, including:

- construction of a house, townhouse, commercial and industrial building
- construction of accessory buildings, including most garages and sheds
- demolition of a building
- significant alteration to or repair of an existing building (e.g. structural changes, electrical updates, construction of a second floor deck, moving of plumbing)
- changes to the use or occupancy of an existing building (e.g. from a garage to a dwelling, or from a residence to a commercial use)
- relocation of a building
- alterations that affect a venting or sewer- age system



- installation of a factory-built or manufactured building
- installation of a temporary building

Is a building permit required for a structure that is under construction when the service takes effect?

No building permit is required for new single-family buildings and accessory buildings that are under construction when the service is introduced, provided that concrete footings, built in compliance with the *Building Code*, are poured prior before the amended service bylaw takes effect. A property owner in this situation needs to submit proof to the CSRD to confirm that the concrete footings were poured prior to the date of service commencement. Proof may include, at a minimum, information such as an email stating the date on which the pour occurred, combined with a time-stamped picture of the pouring, and a copy of the concrete delivery receipt.

To be clear, future additions to buildings that exist prior to the introduction of building inspection will require building permits.

When is building permit NOT required?

If a construction project involves no structural changes, and no relocation or installation of plumbing fixtures, no building permit is required. In addition, certain other types of structures are exempt from the permit requirement, including:

- one storey accessory buildings that are under 10m² in size, are not used for habitation, and do not create a hazard
- farm buildings with "low human occupancy" (defined by the National Farm Building Code of Canada on properties assessed as a farm by BC Assessment)
- non-structural repairs such as window replacements (same size windows), roof updates, kitchen renovations with no movement of plumbing fixtures, finishing of basement with flooring and non-structural (not including creation of secondary suite)
- patios, decks or balconies that are less than 2 feet (0.61m) off the ground

- repairs or minor alterations to the plumbing system or fixtures that do not affect the venting or sewerage system
- landscaping retaining walls below 1.22 m in height that do not support loads created by buildings or parking areas
- construction of , utility poles and towers and public infrastructure systems (as identified in Section 1.1.1.1(2) of the *BC Building Code*)
- un-modified CSA Z240 RV or un-modified CSA Z241 Park Model

How does an owner apply for a building permit?

Building permit applications are available online at the CSRD (www.csr.bc.ca) or in person at the CSRD office in Salmon Arm (555 Harbourfront Drive NE). Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to submit their permit applications in person so that they may be reviewed by staff for completeness. Property owners may contact the Building Department in advance (1.888.248.2773 or 250.832.8194; or buildingpermit@csr.bc.ca) to ask questions, or to book appointments with a Building Inspector.

What other permits may be required?

The CSRD may require other permits, such as a development permit, depending on the type and location of the construction project. Development permit areas are identified in *Electoral Area C (South Shuswap) OCP*. They are established to regulate lands with environmental significance (such as lakefront, foreshore or riparian areas) or hazardous conditions (e.g., steep slopes or flood areas). Other development permit areas are created to ensure that the character of commercial and multi-family developments are developed in accordance with the community vision as expressed in the OCP. Construction within development permit areas must follow guidelines to ensure development is safe for the use intended, that environmental areas are identified and protected, and that the character is consistent with the community vision. As part of the building permit review, Building Department staff determine whether development permits are required. Development permits, where required, must be issued prior to building permits.



Why are six inspections required?

When reviewing its building inspection service, the CSRD examined best practices in other communities. Six inspections is considered the minimum number necessary to adequately ensure adherence to the *BC Building Code*.

The required inspections occur at the following points in the construction process:

1. Footing construction (before concrete)
2. Pre-backfill
3. Under slab plumbing rough-in
4. Framing construction
5. Insulation, vapour barrier, and air barrier
6. Final Inspection

It may be of interest to note, by comparison, that both Revelstoke and Salmon Arm require seven inspections (not including for fireplaces); Sicamous requires eight.

What are the building permit fees?

Building permit fees are used to recover a portion of the cost to provide the service. Service costs are also recovered, in part, using property taxes from each Electoral Area in which the service is provided.

Building permit fees consist of an application fee and the building permit fee. The application fee is a flat amount that is paid at the time of submission. The permit fee is based on the value of the construction, and is paid prior to the issuance of the building permit.

All fees related to building permits are outlined in Schedule A of the *CSRD Building Regulation Bylaw, No. 660*, and are the same across all Electoral Areas with building inspection. At present (June, 2018), the fees are as follows:

- The *application fee* is \$72 for a single-family dwelling, and \$288 for multi-family, commercial, institutional or industrial buildings.
- The *permit fee* is calculated as follows:

- \$72 for first \$1,000 of construction value
- \$7.20 for each additional \$1,000 of value, up to \$100,000
- \$6.00 for each additional \$1,000 of value over \$100,000

For a single-family dwelling with a construction value of \$300,000, the total fees would be \$2,057 (\$72 of which may be credited back to the homeowner).

What days will inspections be available?

Building inspections will be available in Electoral Area C two days per week. Building Official availability will be adjusted for inspection demand and workload.

How do I arrange for a building inspection?

A building inspection must be requested at least 48 hours in advance of the preferred inspection time by contacting the Building Department (1.888.248.2773 or 250.832.8194; or buildingpermit@csrd.bc.ca).

Can a building permit Application be submitted before the spring, 2019, start date for the new service in Electoral Area C?

It is expected that complete building permit applications will be accepted for properties in Electoral Area C in early 2019, once the service establishment bylaw and the *CSRD Building Regulation Bylaw* have been amended to include Electoral Area C. Applications will not be reviewed, and permits will not be issued, however, until after the *Building Regulation Bylaw* and the applicable service establishing bylaw have been fully adopted.

How will inspections be carried out in remote locations in Electoral Area C?

A CSRD building inspector may request that inspections in remote locations, such as water access only or backcountry construction sites, be completed by a registered professional hired by the property owner. If requested, the building inspectors will rely solely on the provided letters of assurance, field reviews and site photos that the registered professional submits. All letters of



assurance and other documents must substantially conform to the project's design, plans and specifications that were submitted at the time of building permit application. All construction must comply with the *BC Building Code*, *CSRD Building Regulation Bylaw* and any other relevant safety codes and regulations.

What is the time period between building permit issuance and expiry?

Once a building permit is issued construction will need to begin within six (6) months from the date of issuance. Construction cannot be suspended for a period of more than six (6) months, and must be completed within a period of three (3) years. If these conditions are not met, the permit will expire.

For a project on which construction has been ongoing, the property owner may renew a permit, prior to expiry, for an extended period of up to 12 months. Only one renewal is permitted. The completion of additional forms and fees may be required.

What is the expected timeline from building permit application to issuance?

Today at the CSRD, there is a 3-5 week permit issuance turnaround time for single-family dwellings, and a shorter turnaround time for smaller building projects. These timelines are expected to remain in effect once the service has been expanded to include Area C.

This turnaround time may increase if a Development Permit application is required (development permit applications need to be reviewed, and development permits issued, prior to the issuance of a building permit).

It is recommended that an estimated timeline be requested at the time of building permit application.

What happens if construction begins without obtaining a building permit?

A Building Inspector will visit a property where construction is occurring without a building permit. Depending on the nature of the construction underway, the Building Inspector may issue a Stop Work Order. If construction continues in violation of this order, the CSRD may consider placing a Notice on Title.

The CSRD reserves its right to enforce the regulations in *Building Regulation Bylaw No. 660*, and to pursue further enforcement, including seeking a court injunction if required to ensure bylaw compliance.

What can Area C residents do if they are concerned about property owners who may be constructing without building permits?

Residents may contact the Building Department (1.888.248.2773 or 250.832.8194; or buildingpermit@csrd.bc.ca) to ask if a building permit is required for the construction that is observed to be occurring. Residents may also formally report construction work being undertaken without a required permit through the CSRD online complaint form, or by contacting a CSRD Bylaw Enforcement Officer (1.888.248.2773 or 250.832.8194; or enforcement@csrd.bc.ca).

Complainant information is considered confidential by the CSRD will not be revealed (it is protected under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*).

Should the matter proceed to court, however, and if required in the legal proceedings, the CSRD may be obligated to disclose the information provided.

