

BC Energy Step Code – Updated December 2022

What is Energy Step Code (ESC)?

Energy Step Code is an optional compliance path in the British Columbia Building Code (BCBC) which was first established in 2012. Local governments were able to incentivize or require a level of energy efficiency in new construction that goes beyond the requirements of the BCBC. Step Code compliance will become mandatory in December 2022.

How does ESC work?

Energy Step Code establishes a series of measurable energy efficiency requirements that builders must meet. The BC Energy Step Code groups these performance requirements into a series of steps of increasing energy efficiency.

There are two compliance paths for improved energy efficiency, one for simple buildings (Part 9) consisting of five steps and another for complex buildings (Part 3) consisting of four steps.

When will be ESC mandatory?

In 2022, all new construction must be 20% more efficient. Part 9 buildings must meet Step 3 and Part 3 buildings must meet Step 2.

As of **January 1, 2023**, all new Building Permit applications must meet these requirements.

What is the goal of ESC?

ESC aims to communicate the future intent of the BCBC and improve consistency in building requirements across BC to transition to net zero energy ready buildings by 2032. It is a tool to encourage or require the construction of more energy efficient buildings in their communities.

What does net zero energy ready buildings mean?

Net zero energy buildings produce as much clean energy as they consume, they are up to 80 percent more energy efficient than a typical new building and use on-site or near-site renewable energy systems to produce the remaining energy they need. A net zero energy ready building can be built to energy-efficient standards such that it could generate enough onsite energy to meet its own energy needs.

What are the benefits of ESC?

Buildings built to higher energy efficiency standards also provide multiple benefits including:

- Improved temperature management, increased comfort
- Better managed air through the building, improving health
- Better soundproofing, reducing exterior noise

- Less energy usage, reducing utility bills
- Create new economic development opportunities
- Creates consistency in energy efficiency throughout BC
- Reduction in GHG emissions and helps achieve climate-action goals

What is an Energy Advisor?

Energy Advisors are third party consultants registered by service organizations licensed by Natural Resources Canada (NRC). They deliver NRC's EnerGuide Rating System, ENERGY STAR for New Homes and R-2000 programs. They can provide both energy modelling and airtightness testing, the two services needed to demonstrate compliance under the BC Energy Step Code for Part 9 residential buildings.

Energy Advisors can be found through the Program-Qualified Energy Advisor Search Tool. Please visit betterhomesbc.ca/ea for more information. They can also be found through the Natural Resources Canada.

What resources are available to help me with ESC?

Please review rdco.com/building for more detail regarding training, educational opportunities, and rebates for Energy Step Code.