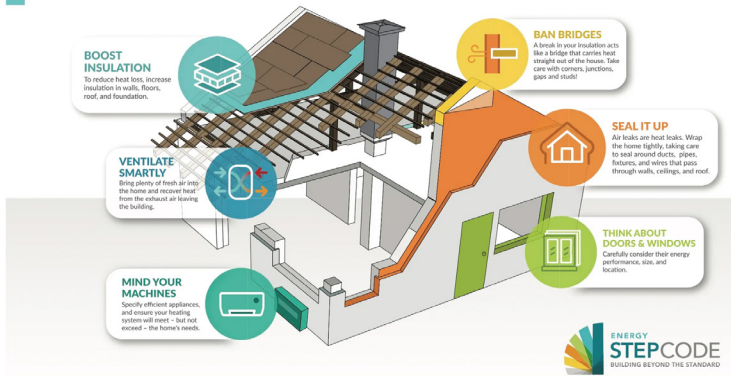




What is the BC Energy Step Code?

INSIDE THE STEP 3 HOME

Six strategies to boost energy-efficiency performance



The BC Energy Step Code is an initiative by the provincial government to ensure that new houses are more energy efficient. The BC Building Code has been amended requiring all new homes to meet the more energy efficient requirements of Step 3 of the Step Code. More information about it can be found here:

www.energystepcode.ca

In the RDBN, there are two options:

Option 1 (the performance approach) requires new homes to be designed with the assistance of a Certified Energy Advisor, who takes the proposed house design and uses software to model the energy efficiency performance of that design. The Energy Advisor then either submits a report that shows that the proposed design meets Step 3 requirements, or they help you adjust the design to be more energy efficient until the requirements are met. That report is then submitted to the RDBN as the authority having jurisdiction. During the construction of the house, the energy advisor will then do a mid-construction air test (usually at the insulation and vapour air barrier stage) and a final air test (before occupancy) using a blower door to test how much air leakage the house has. If there is too much leakage at the mid-construction phase then the leaks are found and addressed. A final report is then issued to the RDBN showing that the house as built has met the Step 3 requirements. A listing of local energy advisors can be found at www.betterhomesbc.ca/ea/. A copy of the compliance report is required before the building permit application can be approved.

Option 2 (the prescriptive approach) involves compliance with Part 9.36 of the BC Building Code which outlines how much insulation is required in the walls, ceiling, floors, etc, and requires more efficient windows (usually triple-paned). These tables call for quite a bit more insulation than may be required in a house modelled by an energy advisor. For example, a house using the prescriptive tables would require R 22.6 on the foundation wall rather than potentially only R 16.9. If you are taking the prescriptive approach, you will need to indicate on your building permit application that you are planning on pursuing this option and indicate on your plans the insulation values and window U-values that meet the prescriptive requirements.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

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