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2012 Edition of Building, Plumbing and Fire Codes

The Province has adopted the 2012 editions of the BC Building Code, BC Plumbing Code, and BC Fire Code (“BC Codes”) with an effective date of December 20, 2012. Generally speaking, if a building permit is applied for prior to December 20, 2012, the 2006 edition of the BC Codes will still apply.

Despite a 37% increase in royalty costs on printed products, pricing has been frozen at 2006 rates. Additionally, a bundling package is now offered that allows users to purchase the BC Codes in multiple formats (print and online subscription) without incurring the full cost of each individual product. The codes are available for purchase and can be accessed online at www.bccodes.ca.

Some major changes include the following:

- lateral load (seismic/earthquake) design requirements for residential home construction; the illustrated guide for seismic design of houses can be found at <http://www.hpo.bc.ca/seismic-design-guide>;
- requirement to consider radon soil gas mitigation;
- new classification for assisted living facilities.

BC participates in the national code development system. Provincial building, plumbing and fire codes are based on national model codes and follow their development and implementation cycle. National codes have been publicly available since 2010 and code users have had access to these documents for several years. BC Codes include a number of variations from the model national codes to account for regional differences and provincial priorities.

Work is ongoing to ensure that the implementation of the 2012 BC Codes proceeds smoothly. This past spring, the Homeowner Protection Office hosted Building Smart Seminars in 22 cities throughout the province to educate stakeholders on upcoming Code changes. Over 1700 people attended including builders, building officials, architects, engineers and manufacturers, as well as staff from the Building and Safety Standards Branch. Further opportunities for education and training will continue to be announced.