



## Building Inspection Service Electoral Areas B, E & F

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### What is building inspection?

Building inspection is a local government service that requires owners to submit building plans for review and receive a building permit from the local government prior to beginning construction. During construction, inspections must be arranged with a building official from the local government at various phases of the project, to ensure the *BC Building Code* standards are met. The service, therefore, ensures construction projects meet both the local government's land use regulations (e.g. OCP, zoning) and public health and safety objectives (expressed in the *BC Building Code*).

### Why do we need building inspection?

A building inspection service allows the regional district to review building plans to ensure they conform to the OCP and zoning, including regulations regarding environmentally sensitive areas such as riparian areas or the foreshore or lake. In addition, buildings have to meet *BC Building Code* standards that protect health and safety of a building's occupants. Building permits also help the owners obtain home insurance, and provide assurance to future buyers that the buildings meet code and comply with local government regulations.

### Will building inspection discourage development?

Building inspection is not expected to discourage development in the region. All four

municipalities within the CSR D already provide this service, and require building permits and inspections. Most regional districts within the Province have established a building inspection service; it is considered a best practice for local governments. Construction is already required to be in accordance with the *BC Building Code*, so builders are already aware of the standards. Experienced builders in the area are also familiar with building permit and inspection processes. The most significant learning curve will be for home owner builders; however, staff at CSR D can help guide these owners through each step of the building inspection process.

It is worth noting that the *absence* of building inspection may actually discourage economic development and growth in the parts of the region that lack the service. Some prospective home buyers and businesses may be reluctant to invest in buildings that are constructed without the benefit of inspections. Inspections, it is widely acknowledged, help to ensure that all construction is of a consistent quality, and is in compliance with the regulations and standards of the *BC Building Code*.

### Why is the service only in Electoral Areas B, E and F?

Electoral Areas B, E and F have identified building inspection as a community priority to ensure that construction conforms to planning



objectives and safety standards. Once the service is created, other electoral areas will be encouraged to join the service.

#### **How much will the service cost taxpayers?**

The cost of the building inspection service will be recovered through a combination of permit fees and property taxes. Property tax impacts are estimated at a rate of 0.078 for every \$1,000 of assessed value of land and improvements. This rate equates to about \$16 for a property valued at \$200,000 or \$23 for a residential property valued at \$300,000.

#### **When will the service start?**

The service will come into effect on January 1, 2018.

#### **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 each participating area to consent to establishing the service on behalf of his or her electors.

The Electoral Area Directors for Areas B, E and F will be asked to provide consent to the new CSRD building inspection service on behalf of the electors in their respective areas. The service bylaw will then be sent to the Province's Inspector of Municipalities for review and approval.

#### **When is a building permit required?**

Each person who wishes to undertake construction in Areas B, E and F will need to apply for and receive a building (and, in most cases, plumbing ) permit before commencing construction. 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 sewerage system
- installation of a factory-built or manufactured building

Anyone who is unsure whether a project requires a permit is encouraged to contact the CSRD building staff (1.888.248.2773 or 250.833.5911; or [plan@csrd.bc.ca](mailto:plan@csrd.bc.ca)).

#### **When is a building permit NOT required?**

If a construction project involves no structural changes and no relocation or installation of new plumbing fixtures, then no building permit is required. In addition, certain types of structures will be exempt, including:

- one storey accessory buildings that are under 10m<sup>2</sup> in size, and do not create a hazard
- projects that are under \$10,000 value
- 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 drywall (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 1.5m in height that do not support loads created by buildings or parking areas
- construction of temporary structures, utility poles and towers and public infrastructure systems (as identified in Section 1.1.1.1(2) of the *BC Building Code*)

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#### **Do I need a permit if I've already started construction before January 1, 2018?**

Property owners that have already passed the framing stage of construction prior to January 1, 2018, would not need to apply for a permit. Owners who have reached this stage prior to this date should keep records of work (invoice receipts and photo documentation) to provide proof that construction had reached this stage prior to January 1, 2018. Any projects underway that have not proceeded past framing stage by January 1, 2018, as well as all new projects, will be required to apply for a permit. Building inspectors will determine how many inspections are required based on the application and what work has already been completed.

#### **How much are permit fees?**

Permit fees vary depending upon the value of the construction, but a new home (including a fireplace) valued at \$200,000 would result in a building permit fee of approximately \$2,100.

#### **How do I apply for a building permit?**

Building permit applications are available online at the CSRD website ([www.csrd.bc.ca](http://www.csrd.bc.ca)) or can be picked up from the CSRD office in Salmon Arm (555 Harbourfront Drive NE). Applicants are encouraged to submit their permit applications in person so that they can be reviewed for completeness. Property owners can contact building staff by phone in advance (1-888-248-2773) to answer any questions, or to book an appointment with a building official.

#### **What other permits (in addition to a building permit) are required?**

The CSRD may require other permits, such as a *development permit* or *plumbing permit*, depending on the type and location of the construction project. *Development permit* areas are identified in the Area B and Area F *Official Community Plans*, and the draft Area E *Official Community Plan* (see CSRD website for copies). Development permit areas are established for land 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. *Plumbing permits* are part of all building permits that require additional or relocated plumbing fixtures. Not all construction projects require a plumbing permit. As part of the building permit review, the CSRD staff will confirm whether any other permits are required.

### **How long will it take to get a permit?**

From the time that applicants submit a complete application (all documents required by the CSRD), building permits typically take 2 to 3 weeks to be processed and issued. In the busy summer months the timeline may increase depending on the number of permits being processed. The CSRD does not process a permit until the application is considered complete and the application fee has been paid.

matter proceed to court, however, and if required by direction of law, the CSRD may be obligated to disclose the information provided.

### **Why are six inspections required?**

When creating the new service, the CSRD considered the existing building inspection service provided in part of Area F, as well as practices in other communities and best practices on implementing the BC Building Code. The CSRD decided on inspections at six stages of construction, as six is considered the minimum number necessary to adequately ensure adherence to the *BC Building Code*. By comparison, Revelstoke and Salmon Arm require seven inspections (not including for fireplaces); Sicamous requires eight.

### **How do I make inspection requests of the building inspector?**

Required site inspections may be scheduled by phoning the CSRD offices at 1.888.248.2773. The owner must provide the Building Inspector a minimum of 2 work days (48 hours) notice when requesting an inspection.

### **What can I do if my neighbour is constructing without a permit (after January 1, 2018)?**

Residents can make a complaint to report construction work being carried out without the required permit(s). The CSRD has an online complaint form on its website ([www.csr.bc.ca](http://www.csr.bc.ca)) and can also be reached by email ([enforcement@csr.bc.ca](mailto:enforcement@csr.bc.ca)) or by phone (250.832.8194 or 250.833.5904). Complainant information is considered confidential by the CSRD and your identity will not be revealed (it is protected under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*). Should the

