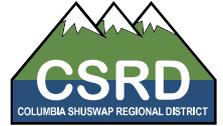


VALUE OF THE SERVICE



HEALTH AND SAFETY

The main purpose of a building inspection service is to protect public health and safety. Building inspection services help to ensure that residential, commercial, industrial and public buildings meet the minimum construction standards presented in the *BC Building Code*.

PLANNING GOALS

Building inspection is a tool to implement and promote a community's local planning goals. In Electoral Areas B, E and F, residents have created OCPs and Zoning Bylaws with regulations to promote a range of important goals, including those related to the protection of watercourse riparian areas, and the type and form of community development. Through the building inspection service, projects will be reviewed for compliance with key planning regulations at a crucial stage in the development process — namely, before construction occurs. In the absence of building inspection, there is a risk that construction may proceed in ways that are not consistent with policies and regulations, and that undermine local planning goals. Construction without building inspection may also result in buildings being placed in potentially unsafe areas (e.g., hazardous areas). Efforts to enforce compliance after construction are costly and acrimonious for the property owners, local government, and local taxpayers.

OTHER BENEFITS

Some of the other benefits of building inspection are as follows:

- ▶ **Ensures Other Requirements are Met** — A building inspection service allows local governments to ensure that property owners have obtained all necessary permits and development approvals, including those required by other agencies such as Interior Health, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and BC Housing.
- ▶ **Promotes Equitable Taxation** — BC Assessment uses permit records to ensure that the assessed value of each property represents that property's true market value. This information provides for an equitable distribution of the property tax burden across all property owners. Without this information, owners who have improved their properties may not be paying their fair share of local taxes.
- ▶ **Provides Important Planning Information** — Local governments collect current and historical building data to assist in making development forecasts, planning policies, and infrastructure plans. The information is also accessed and used by a variety of public agencies and by individuals.
- ▶ **Protects Consumers** — Building permit records provide a level of assurance to homebuyers that construction work has been undertaken in accordance with the standards of the *BC Building Code*. Homeowners who are undertaking renovations can also take comfort in knowing that contractor plans have been reviewed and work inspected for compliance to important health and safety standards.

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 help 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 *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 upheld.