



Ministry of Forests and Range and
Minister Responsible for Housing
OFFICE OF HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS
SERVICE PLAN SUMMARY

2006/07 - 2008/09



Ministry of
Forests and Range

Message from the Minister

As Minister of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing, I am looking forward to continuing the progress made over the past year on housing issues.

In the September 2005 *Budget Update*, we improved support for seniors by approximately doubling the annual funding for the SAFER program (Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters) and improving subsidies for lower income seniors who rent. The changes apply to approximately 12,000 seniors already receiving benefits and open the program to an estimated 7,200 additional seniors.

As Housing Minister, I'm looking forward to building on that success with the release of a comprehensive provincial housing strategy that offers new approaches to the issues relating to homelessness and affordable housing. The strategy will address the housing continuum from homelessness to home ownership.

As well, we'll begin modernizing the building safety regulatory system in B.C. to ensure an effective system for achieving safety in the design, construction and occupancy of buildings.

We'll also work to improve homeowner and landlord and tenant protection through amending legislation.

The Ministry of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing 2006/07–2008/09 Service Plan Summary was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of February 10, 2006 have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rich Coleman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Honourable Rich Coleman
Minister of Forests and Range
and Minister Responsible for Housing
February 2006

Purpose of the Ministry

The Office of Housing and Construction Standards is responsible for provincial housing policy, building policy, safety policy, and the Residential Tenancy Office. In addition, the Office has responsibility for several Crown agencies, boards and commissions including BC Housing, the Homeowner Protection Office (HPO), the Building Code Appeal Board and the Safety Standards Appeal Board.

With this structure, government's efforts to improve access to safe and stable housing for all British Columbians are integrated and aligned.

Ministry Goals

The goals of the Office of Housing and Construction Standards are:

- » Safety is achieved in the built environment, through establishing codes and standards
- » Housing and support services are targeted to those most in need, through allocating provincial resources to projects that further the integration of those services
- » Low and moderate income households have an expanded range of housing options, through providing local governments and community groups with access to planning tools that promote a broad range of housing options
- » Balanced landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities, through legislation that balances their rights and through systems that ensure that all clients are given timely assistance in avoiding or resolving disputes.

Support for the Five Great Goals

To help build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk and seniors, the Office of Housing and Construction Standards is:

- » developing and implementing a Provincial Housing Strategy
- » continuing to deliver transitional housing through the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions
- » promoting accessibility for persons with disabilities through B.C. Building Code provisions that apply to new construction.

Cross Ministry Initiatives

The Office of Housing and Construction Standards contributes to many cross-ministry initiatives and themes:

- » Children's Agenda: by building and supporting the capacity of vulnerable families to achieve self-sufficiency through stable housing.
- » First Nations: by working with the Aboriginal Housing Management Association to continue building its organizational capacity.
- » Crystal Meth: by providing policies and programs that promote self-sufficiency for persons with mental health or addiction issues.
- » Olympics: by participating as an active member of the Inner-city Inclusive Olympics Housing Task Group.
- » Regulatory Reform: by publishing the next edition of the B.C. Building and Fire Codes in an objective-based code format. For the first time, the documents will include the rationale behind each provision.



Ministry Vision and Mission

Vision

British Columbians enjoy secure and affordable housing and safe buildings in which to live, work and play.

Mission

To provide leadership in meeting the building needs of British Columbians by:

- » Promoting a range of housing choices;
- » Developing regulations and promoting their application;
- » Providing information regarding rights and responsibilities; and,
- » Providing mechanisms for resolving disputes.

Core Business Areas

The Office of Housing and Construction Standards is divided into three core business areas:

1. Housing - The Housing Policy Branch core business area provides policy advice to government on ways to address housing need along the housing continuum from homelessness to homeownership. The Branch's role is to identify the strategic points along the housing continuum where government support can assist British Columbians to meet their housing needs. Working closely with BC Housing and other social development ministries, special attention is paid to the area of most acute need found among low income British Columbians with special housing and support needs.

To support government's efforts to help those most in need of housing and support, a new Provincial Housing Strategy will be unveiled in the upcoming year. The Strategy is a comprehensive blueprint for improving the range of housing choices available for British Columbians and will enhance the safety and stability of B.C.'s housing system.

The Branch also provides support and guidance to the Homeowner Protection Office (HPO).

2. Building and Safety Policy - Two branches, the Safety Policy and Liaison Branch and the Building Policy Branch, are responsible for the building and safety policy core business.

The Safety Policy and Liaison Branch provides policy and regulatory advice in the areas of electrical, gas, elevating devices, boiler and pressure vessel products and systems, ski lifts, amusement rides and provincial railways. As well, this Branch manages administrative agreements with delegated authorities under the *Safety Standards Act*.

The Building Policy Branch provides policy advice concerning British Columbia's building regulatory system to improve building safety in the province. In line with the branch's responsibility for the B.C. Building Code and the B.C. Fire Code, branch activity focuses on the development and maintenance of building regulations.

Over the coming year, the Office of Housing and Construction Standards will proceed with an initiative to modernize the system that supports safety in the design, construction and occupancy of buildings.

3. Residential Tenancy Office - Approximately 36 percent of households in B.C. rent their homes. The Residential Tenancy Office core business works to promote a positive relationship between landlords and tenants by providing both groups with information on their rights and responsibilities under the *Residential Tenancy Act* and the *Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act*. The Office also assists landlords and tenants to resolve concerns by providing dispute resolution services, including arbitrations.

As assisted living and supportive housing rental accommodation is not presently covered by legislation to protect the interests of residents and operators, they have no mechanism to settle disputes except through the courts, which is impractical and costly. In 2006/07 the Office will introduce new legislation and a dispute resolution mechanism for these residents.

Ministry Performance Plan Summary

This section details each of the ministry's goals, objectives and performance measures and illustrates how they contribute to government's Five Great Goals.

Five Great Goals	Office of Housing and Construction Standards		
	Office Goals	Office Objectives	Performance Measures /Indicators
Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.	Safety is achieved in the built environment.	Relevant and responsive codes, standards and regulatory systems in place.	Safety index to be established and safety trends maintained or improved.
		B.C. homeowners are protected.	B.C. Building Code and B.C. Fire Code adopted in an objective-based format.
	Housing and support services are targeted to those most in need.	Individuals in need have access to emergency shelter.	Home warranty claims within industry norms.
		Housing and support services targeted to priority groups.	Percentage of nights where shelters are at full capacity.
		Senior renters receive assistance in order to maintain independence.	Percentage of assisted clients belonging to priority groups. Number of units/beds created or adapted for priority clients.
	Low and moderate income households have an expanded range of housing options.	Local governments have access to information and planning tools to achieve their goals with respect to affordable housing options in their communities.	Number of senior households assisted through housing programs.
		Consumer protection legislation in place for assisted living and supportive housing landlords and tenants.	Percentage of local governments in communities over 100,000 that apply affordable housing planning tools and techniques.
	Balanced landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities.	Landlord and tenant disputes are avoided or resolved in a timely manner.	Legislation in place to extend protection to landlords and tenants in assisted living and supporting housing arrangements.
			Percentage of residential tenancy arbitrations scheduled to take place within six weeks.

Baseline data and specific three year targets support each of the performance measures detailed in the previous illustration. Collectively, these measures and associated targets provide a basis for evaluating the ministry's performance and progress towards achievement of our intended outcomes

Performance Measures	Benchmark Baseline model	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
Safety index to be established and safety trends maintained or improved	Complete	Establish safety index	Maintain or improve safety trend	Maintain or improve safety trend
B.C. Building Code and B.C. Fire Code adopted in an objective-based format	N/A	Codes Adopted	N/A	N/A
Home warranty claims within industry norms	4 per cent or less homes with claims	3 per cent or less with claims	3 per cent or less with claims	3 per cent or less with claims
Percentage of nights where shelters at full capacity	New measure	Baseline established	TBD	TBD
Percentage of assisted clients belonging to priority groups	80 per cent	84 per cent	86 per cent	88 per cent
Number of units/beds created or adapted for priority clients	1250 units/beds created	240 adapted 1997 created	265 adapted 984 created	290 adapted 610 created
Number of senior households assisted through housing programs	Baseline 05/06 – New Measure	53,100	53,700	53,840
Percentage of local governments in communities over 100,000 that apply affordable housing planning tools and techniques	69.9 per cent	75 per cent	N/A*	N/A*
Legislation in place to extend protection to landlords and tenants in assisted living and supportive housing arrangements	New measure	Introduce amendments to legislation	N/A	N/A
Percentage of residential tenancy arbitrations scheduled to take place within six weeks or less	92 per cent	92 per cent	93 per cent	94 per cent

* Survey completed every three years



Contact Information

For more information on the British Columbia Office of Housing and Construction Standards visit our web site at: www.housing.gov.bc.ca

The complete Office of Housing and Construction Standards Service Plan 2006/07–2008/09 including other related planning resources is available at: www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2006/sp/for