
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
(Minister Responsible for Housing)

NEW GUIDE BENEFITS HOMEBUYERS AND BUILDERS ACROSS B.C.

VICTORIA – A new Residential Construction Performance Guide is the latest information tool to protect buyers of new homes and enhance the quality of construction in British Columbia, announced Rich Coleman, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General and Minister Responsible for Housing.

“The Province, warranty providers, the residential construction industry and consumer groups are recommending this new publication as the ‘go to’ best-practice, reference guide for owners of new homes and licensed residential builders,” said Coleman.

Developed in consultation with home warranty insurance providers for use in British Columbia, the Residential Construction Performance Guide provides advance information that sets out the minimum required performance of new homes covered by home warranty insurance in B.C.

Warranty providers have agreed to use the guide to help determine whether or not a defect claim is covered by their policies of home warranty insurance.

Available free online, the guide explains how warranty providers will evaluate claims for possible defects in design, labour or materials in new homes. It outlines more than 200 possible defects that are searchable online. This includes the most common defect claims that might be submitted under a home warranty insurance policy - from windows that malfunction to driveway or interior concrete floors that have cracked, or siding that has buckled.

“Homeowners can use the guide to help determine whether or not a concern they have with the quality of their new home may be covered by their home warranty insurance,” said Coleman. “This will help protect consumers and give them realistic expectations about the performance of their new homes.”

The guide is also a valuable information tool for residential builders. Although warranty providers are ultimately responsible for construction defects, most warranty providers have an indemnity agreement with each builder client. This requires the residential builder to correct defects for a certain period of time in which the home warranty insurance coverage is in effect. Builders can use the guide to help meet or exceed the standard to which their new homes will be measured in the event of a claim.

“For most consumers, buying a new home is one of the largest financial investments they will make. So it’s essential that homebuyers can make that investment with confidence, knowing that they will not be faced with additional expenses to repair defects after they move in,” said Tony Gioventu, executive director of the Condominium Home Owner’s Association and an advocate for consumer protection.

The guide is designed primarily for conventional low-rise, wood-frame homes, which is the predominant method of residential construction in B.C. It also provides some helpful guidelines with respect to the common property of larger multi-unit buildings, based on the most frequent concerns identified by warranty providers.

The guide is based on requirements under the Homeowner Protection Act that all new homes built for sale or under a construction contract in B.C. must be covered by home warranty insurance or be exempted by the act. It complements the B.C. building code, but goes beyond the minimum requirements of the code to deal more specifically with defects in the design, materials and workmanship of new homes.

Created by the Province in partnership with the Homeowner Protection Office (HPO) and industry, the new Residential Construction Performance Guide can be viewed on the HPO website at: www.hpo.bc.ca

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Media Contact: Jan Calkins
HPO Communications
BC Housing
778 452-2745

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