

# Regulatory Bulletin

## Experience Requirement for New Residential Builders

### Overview

General contractors applying for a new residential builder licence in B.C. must meet the qualification requirements if they have not previously held a licence, or if their previous licence was closed, suspended, cancelled or expired.

An assessment of qualifications is based on two parts:

- 1) the ability to demonstrate that you meet the minimum experience requirement
- 2) the ability to demonstrate you are qualified in seven core competency areas

This bulletin describes BC Housing's guidelines for meeting the experience requirement.

### Experience Requirement

An applicant must show they have at least 24 months of experience managing or supervising residential construction, within the last 5 years. The purpose of the experience requirement is to ensure that a new licensee has the minimum hands-on skills required to build a new home.

### Calculating the 24 Months

One nominee on the licence application must meet the experience requirement. Experience does not need to take place over 24 consecutive months; however, it must be completed within a five-year period. Also, if multiple projects occurred at the same time, overlapping months will only be counted once.

The 24 months should be full time work; approximately 35 hours per week. Applicants who worked on a part time basis may still apply but must be prepared to demonstrate work equivalent to 35 hours a week for 24 months, which is approximately 3,640 hours.

Only work conducted during active construction is considered in the calculation of experience. Design, planning and development phases are not included.

### Relevant Project Work

List your most relevant projects and experience first on your licence application, including work managing construction of single-family dwellings, duplexes and other new residential projects.



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Although residential construction of new homes is required by regulation, alternate construction experience, such as large residential renovations, commercial or industrial construction may also be considered as equivalent by the Registrar. In addition, if your construction experience was not as a construction manager but in another capacity, such as engineer or architect, you may also submit your relevant project experience for review.

If you want your experience considered as equivalent, you must provide an explanation for how these projects are equivalent to management of residential construction. For example, building or designing a bridge is not sufficiently equivalent to residential construction. However, building a commercial hotel requires similar knowledge with many of the same building components as multi-family residential construction.

If submitting residential renovation projects, the scope must be significant enough to be equivalent to constructing a new home. For example, an applicant with only framing experience is not considered equivalent. Whereas an applicant who completed renovations in many areas including foundations, footings, framing, roofing, cladding or other building envelope components may be eligible. When we review project work, we must be satisfied that an applicant is experienced with constructing all significant components of a new home.

## Evidence of Experience

When you apply for a new residential builder licence, you will be asked to report a total of 24 months of residential construction projects completed within the last 5 years. You will need to provide evidence to support your experience. For example:

- › If you were in business for yourself, you may submit copies of building and occupancy permits
- › If you were an employee, a letter from your employer along with proof of employment is required. We recommend that your employer complete the [Verification of Employment Form](#). It's important to ensure that all necessary details are included to expedite the review of your application. Your employer must fill out the form in their own words, sign it

and provide you with a copy to submit with your licence application. You will also be required to submit proof of employment with your form. This may include:

- A record of employment
- Contract
- Paystubs
- T4 (please redact SIN number before sending)

Include all necessary details to expedite the review of your application.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. Is unpaid work accepted as experience?

**A.** Unpaid work is generally not accepted because it is difficult to verify the experience. If you can show you were an unpaid intern and working under the direct supervision of a licensed builder to manage construction, your experience will be reviewed. In this scenario, we will be looking for additional evidence to substantiate your experience, such as fully documented timesheets with your hours and duties.

We may ask for additional evidence to substantiate your role. This can include providing copies of any communication you had with trades people and inspectors, and work orders under your name. As the applicant, you are responsible for substantiating the hours of unpaid work and showing proof of responsibility for the management and supervision of the project on a volunteer basis.



**Q. How do I gain experience if I am new to the industry?**

**A.** We recommend that you start working under the direction of a licensed residential builder to learn the ropes and work your way up to a position of responsibility managing and supervising construction. Once you have held this position for two years, you can apply and have your employer confirm your roles and responsibilities.

**Q. I am a property owner and I hired a general contractor to build my home. I was on site and assisted in managing construction. Can I use this as experience?**

**A.** We would have to review your role and the builder's role in the project to make a determination. Often in a relationship between a custom homeowner or developer and their general contractor, the homeowner/developer is involved in things such as budgets, material selection and will regularly be on site. Generally, this is not considered experience because it is ultimately the general contractor who manages and supervises construction.

If you are the property owner and hired a licensed builder who enrolled the project under their warranty program but let you manage all or substantially all of the construction, you acted as a builder without a licence. This is an offence under section 14 of the Homeowner Protection Act. You may be subject to compliance orders, monetary penalties and prosecution, and may jeopardize your ability to get a licence in the future. The licensed builder who enrolled the home may face consequences for aiding and abetting an unlicensed builder breach the licensing requirement.

For more information please review [Regulatory Bulletin 26 – Licensing of General Contractors](#) and [Regulatory Bulletin 27– Aiding and Abetting Unlicensed Builders](#).

**Q. Does working on an owner-built project qualify for experience?**

**A.** If you were the owner builder applicant and general contractor for the project, the project would be considered toward your experience. If you were hired as a trades person to work on an owner-built home, this would not qualify as managing or supervising the construction. It would not likely be considered towards your experience.

If you were hired as the general contractor to manage someone else's owner builder home, you may be able to use the project toward your experience however, this would need to be investigated by our compliance department.

Owner builders must build or directly manage the construction of their new home themselves. If an owner builder hires a builder, construction manager, project manager, or any third party to perform these functions, the owner builder is in breach of their declaration under section 4.1(2)(f) of the Regulation. As a result, the owner builder authorization may be suspended or cancelled. The builder hired, if not already a Licensed Residential Builder, is committing an offence for breaching sections 14(1) and 22(1) of the Act. The hired builder can face monetary penalties of up to \$25,000 and may be required to enroll the project in home warranty insurance.

