

Mass-Timber Guidelines Advance Public Safety and Infrastructure Innovation in B.C.

Burnaby, BC, March 31, 2021 – In recognition of the growth in innovative wood engineering and architecture in British Columbia, and to support the safe design and construction of taller mass timber buildings, Engineers and Geoscientists BC and the Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC) have published new guidelines to clarify the expectations for professional practice for architects and engineers designing mass timber buildings up to 12 storeys.

In order to protect the public, the province's engineering and architecture regulators regularly assess new and innovative practices and develop forward thinking practice guidance that allows engineering professionals and architects to apply the latest technologies and pioneer new possibilities. This guideline follows recent legislative changes which allow construction of encapsulated mass timber buildings up to 12 storeys.

"BC's engineers are leading the way in wood innovation, and these joint guidelines outline the necessary standards of professional practice to ensure that engineers working in mass-timber construction are doing so in a way that keeps the public safe, while also demonstrating the social, economic, and environmental benefits of wood infrastructure in creating a more resilient province for future generations." Ann English, P.Eng., FEC, FCSSE, CEO, Engineers and Geoscientists BC.

The new guidelines cover minimum qualifications, professional practice, roles and responsibilities, and quality assurance for encapsulated mass timber construction projects. They also identify issues to be taken into consideration, provide sources of information, and, in some instances, design options when providing architectural, building enclosure, fire protection, acoustical, structural, mechanical, and electrical design services.

"The public expects that architects remain current with contemporary technology, materials, methods, and business practices. The *Joint Professional Practice Guidelines – Encapsulated Mass Timber Construction up to 12 Storeys* will allow registered architects in British Columbia to apply new practices in a manner that is consistent with legislation and puts public-safety first." Mark Vernon, CPA, CA, CPA (Illinois), CEO of the Architectural Institute of British Columbia.

"Our government is moving the mass timber sector forward as part of our approach to building a strong economic recovery. This means aligning all aspects, from building codes to skills training, to using more mass timber in government-funded buildings. Expanding the use of sustainably harvested wood in buildings is good for the climate and it supports jobs from harvesting to engineering." Hon. Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation.

The [*Joint Professional Practice Guidelines - Encapsulated Mass Timber Construction up to 12 Storeys*](#) were developed in response to BC Government changes to the BC Building and Fire Codes to allow construction of mass timber buildings up to 12 storeys based on the new classifications of building size and construction relative to occupancy: Article 3.2.2.48EMTC. Group C, up to 12 storeys, Sprinklered, and Article 3.2.2.57EMTC. Group D, up to 12 storeys, Sprinklered. The guidelines provide guidance on architectural and engineering considerations relating to these significant changes to the 2018 BC Building Code (BCBC), the 2019 Vancouver Building By-law (VBBL), and the 2018 BC Fire Code (BCFC).

“Changes to the B.C. Building Code to accommodate mass timber construction up to 12 storeys create new opportunities for this emerging building system. As a registrant of Engineers and Geoscientists BC, I appreciate its work with the AIBC to ensure that B.C. continues to push forward with wood innovation.”
Hon. George Chow, Minister of State for Trade, Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation.

The development of the guidelines was made possible with the funding and support of Forestry Innovation Investment, National Research Council – Construction Research Centre, Engineers and Geoscientists BC, and the AIBC.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC and the AIBC will be offering a continuing education webinar in the summer of 2021 to provide engineers and architects with an overview of the guidelines and information on how to meet their professional obligations.

About Engineers and Geoscientists BC

Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia is the regulatory and licensing body for the engineering and geoscience professions in BC. To protect the public, we maintain robust standards for entry to the professions, and comprehensive regulatory tools to support engineers and geoscientists in meeting professional and ethical obligations.

About the Architectural Institute of British Columbia

The Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC) is an independent body with the mandate to regulate the profession of architecture in the interest of the public through a responsive framework. Established in 1920 by provincial statute through the *Architects Act*, the Institute establishes standards for entry into the profession of architecture, ensures compliance and provides services to support registrants in maintaining credentials and overall professionalism. For more information about the AIBC, please visit aibc.ca.

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