



Ignite Awareness: A Guide to Fire Safety

Information about your responsibilities as a building owner

The Chilliwack Fire Department created this guide to help local building owners understand their responsibilities and ensure compliance with the applicable rules and regulations. For information specific to different occupancy types, please review the supplementary guides. Thank you for your commitment to keeping Chilliwack safe from fires.

You are responsible!

Ensuring buildings are free of fire hazards is not just common sense – it's a legal obligation. As a building owner, you must comply with the BC Fire Code (BCFC) and adhere to municipal bylaws. Failure to do so puts you, your employees, and your customers at risk.

Why is fire safety important?

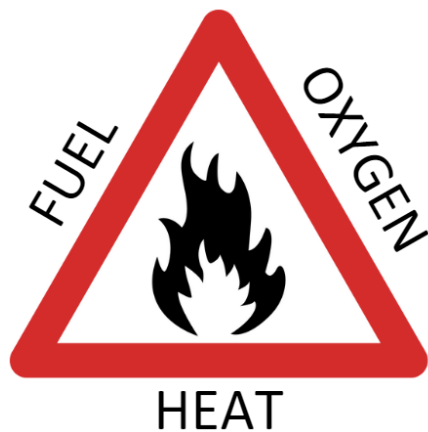
- **Reduces Risk of Injury or Fatality:** Protects employees, customers, and others.
- **Minimizes Business Disruption:** Prevents costly shutdowns due to fire damage.
- **Limits Property Damage:** Keeps damage to your facility to a minimum.
- **Avoids Legal Issues:** Helps you avoid fines and legal troubles for non-compliance.
- **Protects Equipment and Inventory:** Keeps your assets safe.
- **Builds Trust:** Creates a safe environment for employees.
- **Lowers Insurance Premiums:** Proper fire safety can reduce your business insurance costs.
- **Ensures Compliance:** Keeps your business within legal and regulatory guidelines.



Remember, being unaware of the law is not an excuse for not following it.



Understanding Fire Science



Knowing how fire works can help you prevent and combat it more effectively. Three elements are essential for a fire to start and keep burning: oxygen, heat, and fuel. This is known as the fire triangle. Remove any one of these elements, and a fire cannot occur.

Fuel: Any combustible material or substance, such as wood, paper, cloth, gas, or liquid fuels.

Heat: A heat source is required to start a fire. This can come from electrical, chemical, or mechanical sources.

Oxygen: While oxygen itself doesn't burn, it supports the combustion process. More oxygen speeds up the fire, while less slows it down.

The Rules

The **Fire Safety Act** sets out the rules for fire safety in BC.

Key points include:

- **Responsibilities of Owners:** Ensure no fire hazards exist and comply with the BCFC.
- **Fire Inspections:** Inspectors have the authority to enter premises to check for fire hazards.
- **Correction Orders:** Fire inspectors can issue orders to correct any identified hazards.

The **BC Fire Code** is a set of regulations that outline the standards for fire safety in BC. It provides specific requirements for building construction, fire protection systems, and emergency procedures to help prevent and mitigate fires. Some of the key areas covered by the BCFC include:

- **Building construction:** This includes requirements for fire-resistant materials, compartmentalization, and means of egress (exits).



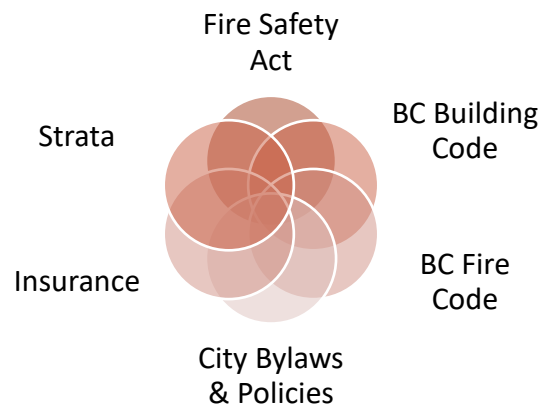
- **Fire protection systems:** This includes standards for fire alarms, sprinklers, and other fire suppression systems.
- **Emergency procedures:** This includes requirements for fire drills, evacuation plans, and emergency response procedures.

The BCFC includes additional standards from organizations such as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), UL Solutions in Canada (CANULC), and the Canadian Standards Association (CSA).

City of Chilliwack Bylaws & Policies provide additional regulations tailored to our community's needs, ensuring a high level of fire safety in Chilliwack.

Strata
Strata corporations must have bylaws and rules that apply to owners, tenants, and visitors. The strata council is responsible for enforcing these rules.

Insurance
Your insurance policy may have specific requirements to maintain coverage for your building. Understanding these requirements will help safeguard your business.



WORKING TOGETHER – FIRE SAFETY IS A TEAM EFFORT!

BC Building Code & the BC Fire Code

These codes work together to ensure building safety:

- **Complementary Requirements:** Both codes cover various safety aspects, ensuring buildings meet fire safety and structural standards.
- **Sequential Enforcement:** The Building Code is enforced during construction, while the Fire Code is enforced once buildings are occupied.

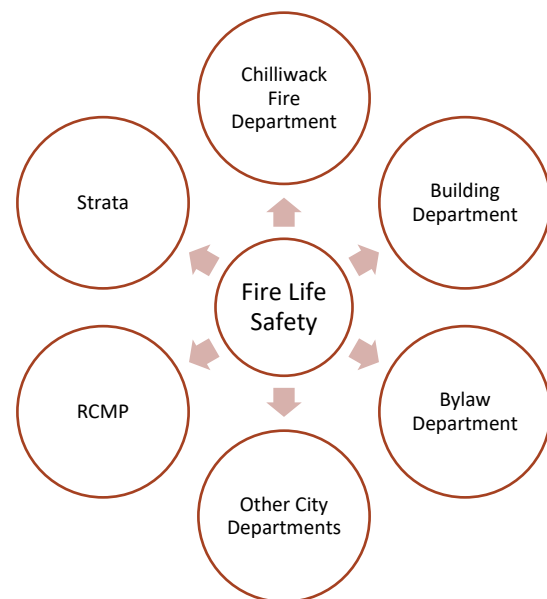


- **Integrated Approach:** Together, these codes create a comprehensive system for building safety.

Together, the BCFC and the BC Building Code protect the lives and property of British Columbians by ensuring buildings are safe, accessible, and meet the highest safety standards.

Enforcement

- **Chilliwack Fire Department:** Enforces the fire code for all properties with occupancy and municipal bylaws. Conducts fire investigations.
- **Building Department:** Enforces the building code & municipal policies for properties under construction or with active building permits.
- **Bylaw Department:** Enforces city bylaws & policies based on authority granted by the Municipal Act.
- **Other City Departments:** Enforce municipal bylaws & policies related to planning, engineering, utilities, and environmental services etc.
- **RCMP:** Investigates incendiary fires and enforces federal laws.
- **Strata:** Enforces bylaws and rules set by each stratum.





Inspection Types

The fire department conducts various inspections based on a risk-based process, development activities, and complaints:

Regular Inspections: Conducted on all inspectable properties, within city boundaries – as outlined by the BCFC, these inspections occur on a three-year cycle. Low-risk, high-compliance properties may be inspected every three years, while high-risk, low-compliance properties are inspected more frequently, at least once a year. Types of occupancies inspected include:



- Multi-residential occupancies (common areas of townhouses/apartments)
- Assembly occupancies (halls, churches, restaurants, pubs)
- Daycares and preschools
- Hospitals and health care facilities
- Manufacturers
- Offices
- Retail and commercial spaces
- Schools and educational facilities
- Service stations (gas stations, automotive repair shops)
- Warehouses
- Mobile food trucks
- Special community event inspections are also provided as needed.

Business License Inspections: Obtaining or renewing a business license can trigger an inspection, depending on the regular inspection cycle, changes in occupancy type, or if the property has been vacant for some time. *Business License inspections are conducted after all other city departments have completed their approvals – you will be contacted when we receive your application at the fire department.*



New Construction or Tenant Improvements: The fire department collaborates with city departments on new developments reviewed by the Design Application Review Team (DART). Inspections and plan reviews occur at the pre-construction phase, and coordination continues with the building department as buildings transition from construction to occupancy. *New Construction or Tenant Improvement buildings are usually required to have a fire department review prior to occupancy, these reviews are typically conducted with both the fire & building department – when you are ready for your final inspection, please ensure that you contact the Building department to schedule this inspection. The building department will connect directly with the Fire Department on your behalf to engage them in the final inspection process.*

Complaints: inspections may be conducted in response to public complaints or post-firefighter-response concerns to verify and address any issues.

Inspections on First Nations Lands:

Fire code enforcement on First Nations lands falls under federal jurisdiction, and the Fire Safety Act (FSA) does not apply to on-reserve public buildings. The fire department can provide inspections to communities under service agreements. *Contact the fire department for more information.*

Inspections on Farm Lands:

The National Farm Building Code of Canada (1995) governs structural design, fire safety, and health considerations primarily for low human occupancy farm buildings. Public-use spaces on agricultural land may be subject to fire inspections. *Contact the fire department for more information.*



General Requirements

Regardless of your occupancy type, there are common factors across most buildings that should be considered:

Property Reference Form: must be updated every time there is a change in the information

Address: must be visible from road/lane, free from foliage, trees, etc; and in contrasting colors

Fire Hydrants: if on-site, must maintain min. of 3' feet of clearance on all sides

Fire Department Access: exterior route to a public road must be clear and safe

Refuse/Recycling Containers: remove combustible containers 10 feet away from buildings or be constructed of non-combustible materials, kept closed and locked

Means of egress: must be accessible at all times, no locking devices needing keys or special knowledge to open

Aisleways: must provide clear access to all exits

Fire Alarm Systems: must be in working order, inspected and tested at least once a year by an ASTTBC qualified technician

Fire Emergency Procedures: must be prominently posted

Fire Safety Plan: must be in place showing procedures for evacuation, use of fire extinguisher, emergency numbers and confirm with the BC Fire Code

Fire Drills: must be documented and performed as per BC Fire Code; records available on site

Exit Signs & Emergency Lighting: visible and illuminated

Fire Separations: must have no holes or openings that compromise the purpose

Fire Extinguishers: must be located adjacent corridors/aisles that provide access to exits, be mounted and in a visible location, accessible, and annually serviced with tags from a certified professional; min. 5lb (2A-10B:C rating) at no more than 75 feet away -see NFPA 10 for more

Electrical Panel: must be covered, clearly labelled, accessible, and no combustible items stored nearby

General Housekeeping: space must be in good condition and arranged in a manner that minimizes fire risk

Extension Cords: for temporary use only

Does My Building Need an Abloy?

Cylindrical locks, known as Abloy's, ensure secure emergency access. Without them, the fire department may face delays and might need to break windows or doors, which can be costly for building owners.

Abloy's are required for new buildings under construction and recommended for all others. They can be purchased from the building department. Once the sleeve is installed, contact the fire department to install the locking mechanism and provide keys. At a minimum, keys are needed for the main entrance, mechanical room, and roof access if locked.



SAMPLE from CFD's annual Fire Inspection Report

The following common compliance issues outlined below do not encompass all aspects of the BC Fire Code, Acts, Regulations, or Local Bylaws. Not all requirements are inspected at each inspection. Building owners must ensure compliance with all applicable regulations specific to their building & its use, including those not explicitly mentioned below. Failure to comply may result in fees, fines, or orders in accordance with local & provincial regulations. The following items were noted at the time of inspection:

<p>* ABLOY (if applicable)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fix/repair <input type="checkbox"/> Provide working keys <p>01. VISIBLE ADDRESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Post building & unit numbers <p>02. FIRE HYDRANTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain minimum of 3 feet access around hydrants <input type="checkbox"/> Paint private hydrants as per City engineering specifications <p>03. FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Remove obstructions from fire access route/lane <p>04. FIRE DEPARTMENT CONNECTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Remove obstructions/maintain accessibility <input type="checkbox"/> Replace connection caps <input type="checkbox"/> Install sign to identify location <p>05. OUTDOOR STORAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Show storage use, size & measures for controlling fire in Fire Safety Plan <p>06. SMOKING AREAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide signage where smoking areas are not permitted <input type="checkbox"/> Provide adequate ash trays where permitted <p>07. REFUSE/RECYCLING CONTAINERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Remove combustible containers 10 feet away from buildings or be constructed of non-combustible materials <input type="checkbox"/> Keep lids closed & locked 	<p>08. MEANS OF EGRESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Remove obstructions to & from exits <input type="checkbox"/> Remove locking devices from exit doors that prevent proper use <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/adjust exit door hardware to open with minimum force <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/replace damaged handrails <p>09. FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Service system/provide current service reports <input type="checkbox"/> Install "Local Alarm Only – Call 911" signs if system is not monitored <input type="checkbox"/> Install smoke alarms <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/replace damaged heat/smoke detectors <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/replace damaged pull stations <p>10. FIRE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Post fire emergency procedures <p>11. FIRE SAFETY PLAN & DOCUMENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Perform drills, tests & inspections as required; update plan annually <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain/provide log book of drills, tests, inspections & maintenance reports <p>12. ASSEMBLY OCCUPANCY (over 60)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Occupancy load must be posted <p>13. EXIT SIGNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Service/repair exit signs <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure exit signs are visible <p>14. EMERGENCY LIGHTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Service/repair emergency lighting 	<p>15. FIRE SEPARATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Repair fire doors/closures <input type="checkbox"/> Remove door stops that prevent proper door closure <input type="checkbox"/> Install "Fire Door – Keep Closed" signs <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/replace fire separation in walls or ceilings <p>16. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Service/repair extinguishers annually <input type="checkbox"/> Mount extinguishers in a visible & easily accessible location; signage may be required <input type="checkbox"/> Replace missing extinguisher <p>17. ELECTRICAL SYSTEM/SERVICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain panel accessibility at all times <input type="checkbox"/> Remove storage in electrical vaults <input type="checkbox"/> Replace extension cords with fixed wiring <p>18. FLAMMABLE & COMBUSTIBLE LIQUIDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Remove/safely store combustible material <input type="checkbox"/> Provide clear identification signs on storage rooms or cabinets <p>19. COMPRESSED GASES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Protect cylinders/tanks from mechanical impact <input type="checkbox"/> Secure cylinders to structural components in upright position <input type="checkbox"/> Remove from exit pathways <input type="checkbox"/> Store spare cylinders outside in a secure area
<p>20. SPRINKLER/STANDPIPE SYSTEM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Service system/provide annual service reports <input type="checkbox"/> Repair damaged equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Remove obstructions to system <input type="checkbox"/> Remove sprinkler obstruction (18" minimum) <input type="checkbox"/> Provide at least 6 spare sprinkler heads & a wrench <input type="checkbox"/> Label sprinkler valves <p>21. SPECIAL FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Service system/provide annual service reports <input type="checkbox"/> Provide signage for use & valve identification 	<p>22. FIRE PUMP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Service system /provide annual service reports <p>23. COMMERCIAL COOKING OPERATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Service system/provide annual service reports <input type="checkbox"/> Clean hoods, ducts, grease removal devices & fans as required <input type="checkbox"/> Instructions for manual operation must be posted <input type="checkbox"/> Provide Class K extinguisher within 30 feet 	<p>24. FUEL DISPENSING STATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> At least two (2) 40B:C extinguishers be provided for every fuel dispensing station <input type="checkbox"/> Post/enforce "No Smoking" signs <input type="checkbox"/> Provide absorbent material to soak up liquid spills <p>25. SPECIAL PROCESSES & DANGEROUS GOODS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure compliance with all applicable regulations including WorkSafe BC & BC Fire Code
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>All service technicians conducting work on fire protection equipment must be ASTTBC certified.</i></p>		

All other repairs & servicing should be completed by certified technicians & with valid permit as appropriate.



Property Reference Information Form

This form must be updated every time there is change in the following information, please forward to fpo@chilliwack.com

Date:	
Civic Address:	
Building Name:	
Business:	
Business #:	
Business Email:	
<i>In the event of an emergency, these numbers may be called, in order. These contacts should, generally, be no more than 30 minutes away from the building.</i>	
1 st Contact Name:	
Title:	
Home #:	
Cell/Alt. #:	
Email:	
2 nd Contact Name:	
Title:	
Home #:	
Cell/Alt. #:	
Email:	
Building Owner/Rep	
Mailing Address:	
Email:	
Phone #:	
Additional Property Access Notes:	



References

Scan the QR Code to access the following websites. If digitally viewing, click on the QR to access the link.



Fire Safety Act



BC Fire & Building Code



City of Chilliwack Bylaws



City of Chilliwack
Business License



City of Chilliwack
Building Permits



NFPA
Building & Life Safety

Contacts

City of Chilliwack

Fire Department – (604) 792-8713

City Reception – (604) 792-9311

Building Department – (604) 793-2905

Planning Department – (604) 793-2906

Business Licensing – (604) 793-2909