



BC CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY INTRODUCES WORKSITE CONDUCT STANDARDS TO IMPROVE WORKER RETENTION

Builders Code program aims to make construction workforce 10 per cent women by 2028

VICTORIA, BC (March 8, 2019) –The Province of B.C. and the BC Construction Association (BCCA) marked International Women’s Day today with the launch of the Builders Code, a comprehensive program that aims to address B.C.’s skilled labour shortage by reducing harassment, bullying and hazing on construction worksites. The Builders Code defines an Acceptable Worksite and provides employers with tools, training and resources to improve and promote safe and productive worksite behavior.

Led by the BCCA, in collaboration with the Province and industry partners, including the Industry Training Authority, WorkSafeBC, LNG Canada, BC Construction Safety Alliance, Employee Benefits Trust, Minerva Foundation of B.C. and four Regional Construction Associations (NRCA, SICA, VICA, VRCA), the Builders Code includes an ambitious “10x10” goal to have B.C.’s skilled workforce comprised of 10 per cent tradeswomen by 2028, a standard not yet achieved by any province in Canada.

The Builders Code expands the definition of construction safety beyond physical hazards to include stress or distraction caused by discrimination, bullying, hazing or harassment. A Builders Code worksite will seek to be free from behaviour that threatens the stability of work conditions including job performance, health, well-being, safety, productivity and the efficiency of workers.

At its core, the Builders Code seeks to improve the retention of tradeswomen who are working in B.C.’s construction sector. Project partners quickly recognized that to be successful, the Builders Code could not single out tradeswomen for special consideration. Every person working on a worksite is affected by stress and distraction caused by bullying, hazing and harassment.

“As Canada’s largest construction project, we have already helped provide training for more than 1,000 apprentices in BC.,” said Andy Calitz, CEO, LNG Canada. “We are committed to creating a workplace that supports equity and diversity. Our support of the Builders Code will help the province grow and retain its skilled labour pool. We look forward to working with contractors and suppliers whose commitment to safety and diversity matches our own.”

The Builders Code will be a valuable opportunity and asset for contractors looking for competitive ways to attract and retain skilled tradespeople at a time when B.C. faces a skills shortage of 7,900 workers, and when tradeswomen comprise only 4.7 per cent of the skilled workforce. Although women, youth, and other equity-seeking groups are entering construction trades at a higher rate than in the past, retention rates remain low. First year retention rates for women apprentices have anecdotally been estimated at less than 50 per cent. By comparison, first year retention rates for men are estimated at 70 per cent. Those contractors who lead the way in culture change will have a distinct advantages.

“Our people are what makes Houle successful, and we’re devoted to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all our employees,” said Paul Hill, President, Houle Electric Ltd. “Hazing, bullying and harassment of any employee or co-worker is unacceptable, and being one of the first companies in BC to sign the Builders Code worksite pledge is our way of reaffirming to everyone on our jobsites that safety is our first priority.”

The Builders Code pilot will highlight the business and safety implications of worksite behaviour and provide employers with the tools they need to improve retention. Employers can access no-cost posters and policies, training, and advice from experts with experience in human resources management, including mediation and conflict resolution. Contractors who lead the way will benefit from higher employee retention rates resulting in lower training costs and will gain a reputation for fair and equal treatment that will help them recruit skilled workers and market their business. They’ll also have the opportunity to be recognized via a scorecard and an awards program created specifically for the construction industry by the Minerva Foundation of B.C..

“A skilled tradesperson is a valuable asset, not a gender or demographic,” said Chris Atchison, President, BCCA. “Worksite behavior is not a women’s issue, it’s a business issue. The Builders Code and 10x10 target are industry’s way of stepping up on International Women’s Day to show that we recognize the need for change and we’re ready to do the work. The resources are available to all construction employers and we’re confident they will be utilized.”

Reaching the 10 per cent goal will equate to adding another 9,500 women into the skilled trades in B.C.’s Construction industry. That achievement would be especially significant as it would effectively erase B.C.’s projected skills gap of 7,900 workers.

“At Kinetic Construction, we view site safety and respect of others as more than just a requirement, it’s part of our culture,” said Tom Plumb, President and C.E.O.. “The Builders Code fits in perfectly with our pro-active approach to the site environment and safety and the “See It, Say It, Fix It” motto we have on all of our jobsites reflects that.”

Throughout 2019, the Builders Code partners will continue to make equity and diversity a corporate leadership priority for construction employers, rolling out expanded resources and services in every region of the province.

The Builders Code is an initiative of the Construction Workforce Equity Project, funded by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training through the Sector Labour Market Partnership Program.

For more information about the Builders Code, please visit: www.builderscode.ca

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BACKGROUNDER

Builders Code Partners:

BC Construction Association
Industry Training Association (ITA)
WorkSafeBC
BC Construction Safety Alliance
Employee Benefits Trust
Minerva Foundation
LNG Canada
Northern Regional Construction Association
Southern Interior Construction Association
Vancouver Island Construction Association
Vancouver Regional Construction Association

These partners provide expert knowledge and unique abilities to reach construction employers and their workers.

Quotes

- **WestCom Plumbing**

“As a tradeswoman and also a construction employer sponsoring apprentices, I want to thank the Province and the BCCA for taking a leadership role in improving the culture on B.C. worksite. All workers, men or women, deserve the chance to grow and thrive in their chosen profession. For too long, behaviour that isn’t tolerated elsewhere has been tolerated on construction worksites. Thankfully, employers will now have the tools they need to address such issues, and will see from top employers who sign the pledge that operating by the Builders Code isn’t just the right thing to do, it also makes good business sense.” - Mary-Anne Bowcott (Plumber & Owner)

- **CGI Constructors:**

“At CGI, we believe that being a leader in construction means you have to be as passionate about what we build as how we build it. We pride ourselves being committed to being a great place to work and are proud to sign the Builders Code Pledge so that employees on our sites know we support them to perform at their best and reach their full potential.” - Anthony Minniti, VP Western Canada

- **Minerva Foundation of BC:**

“As an organization that delivers a range of unique programs to help women develop their leadership capacity and find meaningful work, the Minerva Foundation is a proud partner of the Builders Code. When it comes to changing the face of leadership in any sector, changing the mindset of the current leadership is especially important. We look forward to recognizing employers in BC’s construction industry who lead the way by using the Builders Code and its resources to improve conditions and opportunities for all their employees.” - Tina Strehlke, CEO

- **WorkSafeBC:**

“WorkSafeBC is pleased to support the Builders Code's objective of giving contractors the tools they need to address inappropriate worksite behavior in order to improve worksite safety and reduce the likelihood of workplace incidents across BC. Employers, supervisors and workers all share the responsibility to prevent workplace bullying and harassment.” - Brian Erickson, interim president and CEO, and senior vice-president, Finance and IT, and CFO

- **Industry Training Authority:**

“At ITA, we recognize the benefits of ongoing professional development for everyone in in BC’s skilled trades system, from apprentice to employer. By helping contractors establish and maintain a fair and respectful standard of worksite behavior that will help apprentices thrive, the Builders Code will be play an important role in BC’s construction industry.” - Shelley Gray, Interim Chief Executive Officer

- **Province of B.C.**

“Advancing women in the construction trades is a key way to address the need for skilled workers throughout the province. International Women’s Day celebrates the incredible contribution women make to our strong economy, and we honour the impact of tradeswomen by looking for more ways to ensure their success continues beyond the classroom. Working together, we can build the best B.C.”- Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

“All British Columbians deserve the opportunity to share in the benefits of our thriving economy. With a construction industry that’s booming and thousands of tradespeople needed, the Province is proud to support B.C.’s construction employers in making sure everyone on a jobsite knows what’s expected and can work safely and productively.”
- Mitzi Dean, Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity

BC Construction Statistics:

(Source: [BC Construction Stat Pack Spring 2019](#))

- Construction rank as an employer in B.C.’s goods sector: #1
- Value of proposed construction projects in British Columbia: \$261 billion
- BC construction industry contribution to B.C.’s GDP 8.7%
- Estimated value of current major construction projects underway in B.C.: \$74 billion in addition to the \$40 billion LNG Canada project in the North. (5-year trend: Up 46%)
- Number of construction jobs in BC that will be unfilled due to labour shortages by 2028: 7,900
- Number of construction companies in BC: 25,432 (5-year trend: Up 14%) (92% have less than 20 employees)
- Number of Employees in B.C.’s construction sector: 242,500 (5-year trend: Up 21%)
- Number of credentialed tradespeople: 180,300
- Number of credentialed tradeswomen: 8,474
- Average yearly wage of B.C. construction employees: \$61,202 (\$14.8B cumulative yearly wage) (5-year trend: Up 8%)
- Number of B.C. high school grads that enter construction trades programs within 1 year of graduation: 1 in 45 (5-year trend: Up 21%)

About British Columbia Construction Association

The British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) works with four Regional Construction Associations (NRCA, SICA, VICA and VRCA) to serve more than 10,000 employers in the provinces industrial, commercial, institutional (ICI) construction industry. BCCA’s programs and services include employee benefits (BCCA Employee Benefits), technology tools for bid and project management (BidCentral), and employment programs (Skilled Trades Employment Program (STEP), Integrating Newcomers, LNG Canada Trades Training Fund, LNG Canada Connect)). BCCA advocates on behalf of all employers to ensure British Columbia’s construction sector remains productive and resilient.

For more information about BCCA, please visit: <https://www.bccasn.com/>