
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

B.C.'s construction industry launches code of conduct on International Women's Day

VANCOUVER – A new initiative called the Builders Code aims to retain more women in the construction trades by creating a supportive, inclusive work environment that works for everyone.

A key goal is to have women make up 10% of B.C.'s construction trades by 2028, a standard not yet reached by any province in Canada. Currently, women comprise only 4.7% of B.C.'s construction trades.

The Builders Code was launched on International Women's Day by the provincial government and industry partners including the BC Construction Association (BCCA), Industry Training Authority (ITA), WorkSafeBC and LNG Canada. The Builders Code is a standard code of conduct for all workers on construction sites in B.C., supported by a series of innovative services and resources for employers.

"Advancing women in the construction trades is a key way to address the need for skilled workers throughout the province," said Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. "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."

The Builders Code, which includes a voluntary standard code of conduct for all workers on construction sites in B.C, expands the definition of construction safety beyond physical hazards to include stress or distraction caused by discrimination, bullying, hazing or harassment. Builders Code worksites will be free from behaviours that affect job performance, health, well-being, safety, productivity and the efficiency of workers.

The Builders Code also provides contractors with competitive ways to attract and retain skilled tradespeople at time when B.C. is facing a skills shortage. Although women, youth, Indigenous peoples and other equity-seeking groups are entering construction trades at a higher rate than in the past, their numbers remain low.

"All British Columbians deserve the opportunity to share in the benefits of our thriving economy," said Mitzi Dean, Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity. "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."

The pilot program will help people learn how jobsite behaviour and better human resource tools can improve retention. Employers can access no-cost posters and policies and training, as

well as advice from experts with experience in human resource management, including mediation and conflict resolution. Contractors who lead the way can be recognized by an awards program created specifically for the construction industry.

“A skilled tradesperson is a valuable asset, not a gender or demographic,” said Chris Atchison, president, BCCA. “Jobsite behaviour is not a women’s issue, it’s a business issue. The Builders Code and '10% over 10 years' 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 used.”

The Builders Code partners seek to make equity and diversity a corporate leadership priority for construction employers. Throughout 2019, the Builders Code will roll 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 Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training through the Sector Labour Market Partnerships program.

On International Women’s Day in 2018, the Province announced \$1.8 million to support resources aimed at removing barriers to women’s participation in the construction trades. Two groups, the BCCA and the BC Federation of Labour, and their industry partners are developing a range of programs that support construction employers and advance career opportunities for women in the building trades.

Quotes:

Tina Strehlke, CEO, 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 B.C.’s construction industry who lead the way by using the Builders Code and its resources to improve conditions and opportunities for all their employees.”

Brian Erickson, interim president and CEO, WorkSafeBC –

“There’s no question that stress caused by harassment, bullying and hazing can impact everyone on a jobsite and lead to jobsite accidents. By giving contractors the tools they need to address inappropriate worksite behaviour, the Builders Code can play a significant role in improving worksite safety, reducing accidents and increasing jobsite productivity across B.C.”

Shelley Gray, interim CEO, Industry Training Authority –

“At ITA, we recognize the benefits of ongoing professional development for everyone in B.C.’s skilled trades system, from apprentice to employer. By helping contractors establish and maintain a fair and respectful standard of jobsite behaviour that will help apprentices thrive, the Builders Code will play an important role in B.C.’s construction industry.”

Andy Calitz, CEO, LNG Canada –

“As Canada’s largest construction project, which has already helped provide training for more than 1,000 apprentices in B.C., LNG Canada is pleased to support the Builders Code, which 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 ours.”

Quick Facts:

- B.C. has more than 1.2 million women working – the most in B.C.’s history, and women represent nearly half of the current provincial labour force.
- According to the 2018 Labour Market Outlook, 903,000 job openings are expected over the next decade, with almost 80% requiring some level of post-secondary education or skills training. This includes 41,000 jobs in construction trades occupations.
- The Province is investing \$20 billion in infrastructure in communities throughout the province – the largest capital plan in B.C.’s history. The construction of these schools, roads, health-care facilities and post-secondary institutions will support over 80,000 jobs during construction over the next three years.
- The total value of current major construction projects underway in B.C. is an estimated \$74 billion in addition to the \$40-billion LNG Canada project in the North.
- The British Columbia Construction Association works with four regional construction associations to serve more than 10,000 employers in the province's industrial, commercial and institutional construction industries.

Learn More:

The Builders Code: www.builderscode.ca

BC Construction Association: www.bccassn.com

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Building the best B.C.

The BC Construction Association developed the Construction Workforce Equity Project in response to a call for response by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training for pilot projects to address recommendations in the 2017 Services to Support Tradeswomen: A BC Environmental Scan.

As a result of the project work, the Builders Code brand and concept was developed to bring the project resources to market.

The BC Construction Association partners include:

- BC Construction Association;
- Industry Training Association;
- WorkSafeBC;
- BC Construction Safety Alliance;
- Employee Benefits Trust
- Minerva Foundation;
- LNG Canada; and
- four Regional Construction Associations (NRCA, SICA, VICA, VRCA).

The BC Federation of Labour also responded to the call for response to develop a range of resources. Its partners include:

- BC Building Trades;
- BC Tradeswomen Society;
- BC LNG Alliance;
- Ending Violence Association of BC;
- Construction Labour Relations Association; and
- Social Research and Demonstration Corporation Canada.

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