



This information is provided for clarification purposes only and is not in substitution of any applicable City Bylaws or Provincial or Federal Codes or laws. In the case of any contradictions, legislative Codes, laws or Bylaws take precedence. You must satisfy yourself that any existing or proposed construction or other works complies with such Bylaws, Codes, applicable Acts, regulations, and decisions and orders of any person or body having jurisdiction over the Lands.

Incentives for New High-Performance Single-Family and Duplex Dwellings

No.: BUILDING-46
Date: 2021-02-25
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This bulletin is to inform Applicants, Builders, and Energy Advisors of the City's incentives for high-performance dwellings.

Summary

- Effective March 16, 2021, dwellings built to the upper tiers of the BC Energy Step Code or the Passive House Standard are eligible for various incentives including reduced fees and floor area exemptions.
- For more information about the Passive House Standard, see [Passive House Canada's website](#).
- Additional rebates and incentives are available through [CleanBC's Better Homes program](#).

City of Richmond's High-Performance Incentives

Performance Level	Incentives	Comments
Step 5* (BC Energy Step Code)	Area Exemption equivalent to 5% of maximum permitted Floor Area Ratio for additional wall insulation only and up to 5.0 m² for mechanical equipment (HRV) ; 100% Building Permit fee refund at Final.	Permit fee refund only available until Step 5 becomes the minimum requirement (~2025) .
Certified Passive House	Area Exemption equivalent to 10% of maximum permitted Floor Area Ratio (46.0 m ² max) and up to 5.0 m² for mechanical equipment (HRV) ; 100% Building Permit fee refund at Final.	—

* Only the **absolute Thermal Energy Demand Intensity targets** for meeting the envelope performance requirements are allowed. See [BC Building Code 2018, Revision 5](#).

Applications using exterior walls thicker than 6" can get FAR bonus to compensate interior space occupied with thicker walls; 1% FAR bonus per each inch above 6" wall. For example, a 2"x8" stud wall or 2"x6"+2" exterior insulation would get a 2% FAR bonus. **Note:** Applications using the incentives in the table above can no longer use the thicker wall FAR bonus.

See over →

Application and Verification Procedures

1. Prior to submitting the Building Permit application:

- **Energy Step Code 5:** the applicant must submit a **request letter** to the Director of Building Approvals, along with the Pre-Construction Energy Step Code Compliance Report and supporting documents as per the City of Richmond bulletin (Building-38). The request letter must detail the requested floor area exemptions and provide a rationale for each item. Upon verification of compliance of the Proposed House with the applicable Step, the Manager of Plan Review will provide an ***Incentive Authorization Letter*** outlining the granted incentives. **A copy of this letter must be included in the full Building Permit application package.**
- **Certified Passive House:** A **request letter** must be submitted to the Director of Building Approvals, along **with a letter from a Certified Passive House Designer** attesting to the Passive House performance of the proposed design, and a letter from a **Passive House Certifier**, assuring that if built as designed, the proposed house will achieve Passive House Certification. The request letter must detail all the requested floor area exemptions and the rationale for each item. Upon review of the request letter and supporting documents, a meeting will be arranged by the Manager of Plan Review to discuss the exemption request with the applicant. Other staff from Building Approvals and other departments may be present at the meeting, at the discretion of the Manager of Plan Review. After the meeting, and pending any justification or clarification requested during the meeting, the Manager of Plan Review will provide an ***Incentive Authorization Letter*** outlining the granted incentives. **A copy of this letter must be included in the full Building Permit application package.**

2. Prior to requesting Final Building Inspection:

- **Energy Step Code 5:** As-built Energy Step Code Compliance Report confirming compliance with Step 5, as applicable, and supporting documents as per the City of Richmond bulletin [Building-38 Energy Step Code: Part 9 Single-Family Dwellings and Duplexes](#).
- **Certified Passive House:** Confirmation of Certification.

3. Building Permit fee refunds will be issued upon successful completion of Final Inspection.

Penalty for Non-Compliance with Conditions of the Incentive Authorization Letter

Should construction for a proposed Passive House with density incentives be discontinued, or the required performance levels as outlined the *Incentive Authorization Letter* be abandoned, the **Building Permit shall be cancelled and the construction stopped**. Construction at that point may continue only after a **new Building Permit** compliant to existing Zoning Bylaw regulations is approved. This will require **removal of additional built area beyond that permitted in the Zoning Bylaw in effect at the time of the Building Permit application resubmission**.

Should you have any questions, comments, or suggestions concerning this bulletin, please reference the Bulletin number and email building@richmond.ca or call the Building Approvals General Inquiries line at 604-276-4118.