

NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR DESIGNER QUALIFICATIONS FOR HOUSE PROJECTS

EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2005

UNDER THE ONTARIO BUILDING CODE



Recent changes to the Ontario Building Code will now require, as of July 1st, 2005, that the designers of certain construction projects must be pre-qualified in their knowledge of the Building Code by writing and passing technical exams. The qualifications will depend in part on the scope of the design activity being performed by the designer. Some projects may require several qualified designers to be involved, each one qualified in their limited scope of expertise (i.e. plumbing versus fire safety).

This bulletin focuses on the designer requirements for house⁽¹⁾ projects. For other project types, please see Section 2.17 of the Building Code.

The requirements for qualifications will vary based on whether it is the property owner or someone else who is taking responsibility for the design, and based on the nature of the project.

Where the designer must be qualified, or must be a registered designer, please visit the web site of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (<http://www.obc.mah.gov.on.ca>) to obtain more information about the qualification process.

WHERE THE DESIGNER IS THE OWNER OF A HOUSE⁽¹⁾

No Pre-Qualifications Required

The owner of a house⁽¹⁾ is allowed to prepare and take responsibility for the design of the following projects, without having to be pre-qualified. The owner must still prepare plans and specifications in sufficient detail to demonstrate the project will comply with all technical requirements of the Ontario Building Code.

- Construction of their own new house⁽¹⁾
- An addition to their existing house⁽¹⁾, including but not limited to the construction of a deck attached to the house
- A material alteration or repair of their existing house⁽¹⁾ including but not limited to alterations to create a new bedroom, alterations

to the structural, plumbing, heating, ventilation or air conditioning systems, or alterations to create a second suite (subject to Zoning By-law compliance)

- Construction of an ancillary building such as a deck, shed, gazebo, pool cabana, hot tub shelter or garage
- Construction of site services such as surface grading around a building, or the underground plumbing services outside of or underneath a building
- Construction of a sewage system

Qualified Designer Required

An owner would need to possess the required technical qualifications⁽²⁾ to design any other building structure on their property.

WHERE THE DESIGNER IS NOT THE OWNER OF THE HOUSE⁽¹⁾

No Pre-Qualifications Required

Persons who prepare plans and specifications and take responsibility for the design of construction projects related to a house⁽¹⁾ need not be pre-qualified in their Building Code knowledge for the following projects.

- Construction of site services such as surface grading around a building, or the underground

plumbing services outside of or underneath a building

- Construction of pre-engineered elements of a building provided that the design of the elements is carried out by a person competent in the specific discipline appropriate to the circumstances
- Construction of appliances, equipment and similar incidental components of a building such as furnaces and water heaters
- Construction of an on-site sewage system provided it is designed by the registered installer of the system
- Construction of an ancillary building 50 sq.m or less such as a deck, shed, gazebo, pool cabana, hot tub shelter or garage

Qualified Designer Required

Persons who prepare plans and specifications⁽³⁾ and take responsibility for the design of the following construction projects related to a house⁽¹⁾ must possess the required technical qualifications⁽²⁾, but need not be a registered designer (for which they would require liability insurance)

- Construction of a new house⁽¹⁾ provided the designer is also the builder who must be registered under the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act (ONHWPA)
- An addition to an existing house⁽¹⁾, including but not limited to the construction of a deck attached to the house
- A material alteration or repair of an existing house⁽¹⁾⁽³⁾ including but not limited to alterations to create a new bedroom, alterations to the structural, plumbing, heating, ventilation or air conditioning systems, or alterations to create a second suite (subject to Zoning By-law compliance)
- Construction of a plumbing system for a house⁽¹⁾⁽³⁾
- Construction of a heating, ventilation and/or air conditioning system for a house⁽¹⁾
- Construction of an ancillary building greater than 50 sq.m such as a deck, shed, gazebo, pool cabana, hot tub shelter or garage



- Extension or the material alteration or repair of an existing detached structure <50 m² that is associated with a house⁽¹⁾ where the structure is not an ancillary building
- Construction of a factory-built house certified to CAN/CSA-A277
- Construction of mobile homes conforming to CAN/CSA-Z240
- Construction of park model trailers conforming to CAN/CSA-Z241

Registered Designer Required

Persons who prepare plans and specifications and take responsibility for the design of the following construction projects related to a house⁽¹⁾ must possess the required technical qualifications and must be a registered designer (for which they will require liability insurance)

- A new house⁽¹⁾ if the designer is not a builder registered under the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act
- Construction of a residential building other than a house⁽¹⁾, a factory-built house, a mobile home or a park model trailer, such as a rooming house or a triplex
- Construction of a new detached structure other than an ancillary building
- Extension or the material alteration or repair of an existing detached structure >50m² that is associated

with a house⁽¹⁾ where the structure is not an ancillary building

- An on-site sewage system if the designer is not the registered installer
- Any projects not described in the previous two subsections.

For updated information please check our web site at:

www.london.ca > City Services > scroll to > Construction and Building Section

City of London May 2005

- (1) A house is defined to be a detached house, a semi-detached house, a town house or a row house containing not more than two dwelling units in each house.
- (2) The designer is exempted from being qualified if someone else who is either an employee of a registered designer under 2.17.4.7.(1)(d), or is otherwise qualified under 2.17.5.1.(1) reviews and takes responsibility for the design compliance with the Building Code, as per 2.17.5.1.(2)(a).
- (3) Designer qualifications do not apply where drawings or specifications are not required by the municipality.

The information contained in the articles above represents our current understanding of the new legislation and is prepared for purposes of convenience only and is subject to change.