

Introducing the BCCA Guideline to Construction Close-Out Procedures

BCCA has published a guidelines document “Procedures Concerning Construction Contracts and Close Out of Projects”, modelled after similar reference documents that have existed for some time in Ontario and Alberta.

Getting a construction project to the milestones of *Substantial Performance of the Work* and then to *Completion and Turn Over* are some of the most difficult challenges during the construction of a facility. The process involves thousands of actions performed by hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals from all facets of the construction chain including manufacturers, distributors, suppliers, subcontractors, sub-subcontractors, contractors, construction managers, consultants, allied professionals, project managers, developers, owners, government, and end users. While the obligations of each are often detailed in the project documents (The BCCA Guideline follows those of a CCDC Contract), they are not always coordinated as well as they could be, which can lead to costly delays in achieving *Substantial Performance* and then *Total Completion*.

If End Users are not able to use the facility as intended, completion will take more time and money and result in delay of payments. The BCCA Guideline has been created to help the project closeout go more smoothly: often, the last 3% of the project is often taking at least 15% of the effort. It takes a collaborative effort to make sure the last 3% of the project consumes 3% or less of the effort.

The BCCA Guideline has been produced by the BCCA’s Standards and Practices Committee. Its primary purpose is to introduce best practices which will expedite and simplify the takeover of a project by its owner from the contractor who managed its construction. The Guideline includes recommended practices following the principles and methods for successfully completing the takeover process efficiently for all parties.

The BCCA Guideline was prepared in response to members of the construction industry reporting that the closing out of construction projects was becoming increasingly difficult. Several key problem areas were identified:

- **Timeliness** – Takeover issues need to be addressed before the tendering of the project. For example the owner / consultant should communicate expectations in the bid documents, and then address them from the first site meeting onward and at every subsequent site meeting.
- **Communication** – The owner / consultant needs to communicate the quality standards on a particular project within the specifications at the time of the bidding process, and include the specific requirements in regard to deliverables and the level of commissioning activities to be completed prior to owner’s occupancy. The communication must be continued throughout the project (there should be no surprises toward the end of the project).
- **Teamwork** – Something as complex and expensive as a construction project is best built with a sense of teamwork. If everyone in the process approaches the project with the sense that they are there to provide a quality job on time and on budget in a spirit of cooperation, a project can and will go very

well. The subcontractors and suppliers should be expected to be active participants in the project and take responsibility for the quality and scheduling of their work, work cooperatively with the contractor, consultants and other subcontractors, be mindful of the construction schedule and attend to deficiencies as soon as they come to their attention.

The recommendations in the *BCCA Procedures Concerning Construction Contracts and Close Out of Projects Guideline* reflect these ideas and more. It is in the interests of the whole construction industry - including owners -- to make the takeover of construction projects more time effective and less stressful for all participants.