# Path to Licensure and Successful Architectural Career in **Canada**

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Date (January 2026)

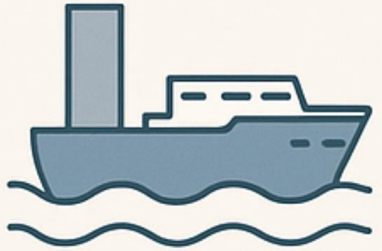
Part 1:
Overview of the Profession in Canada
Part 2:
Steps to Licensure ("Getting the Stamp")
Part 3:
Key Knowledge Areas and Skills for a Successful Career
Part 4:
Lifelong Professional Development
Conclusion and Q&A

**ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER**

Concept development

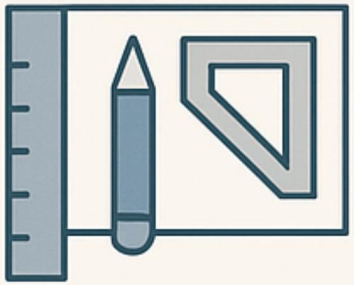
**ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT MANAGER**

Overseeing projects



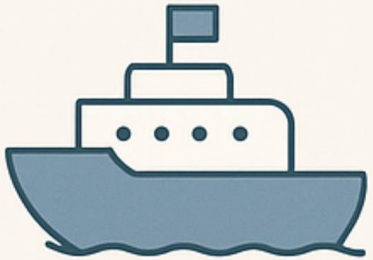
**ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGIST**

Technical design



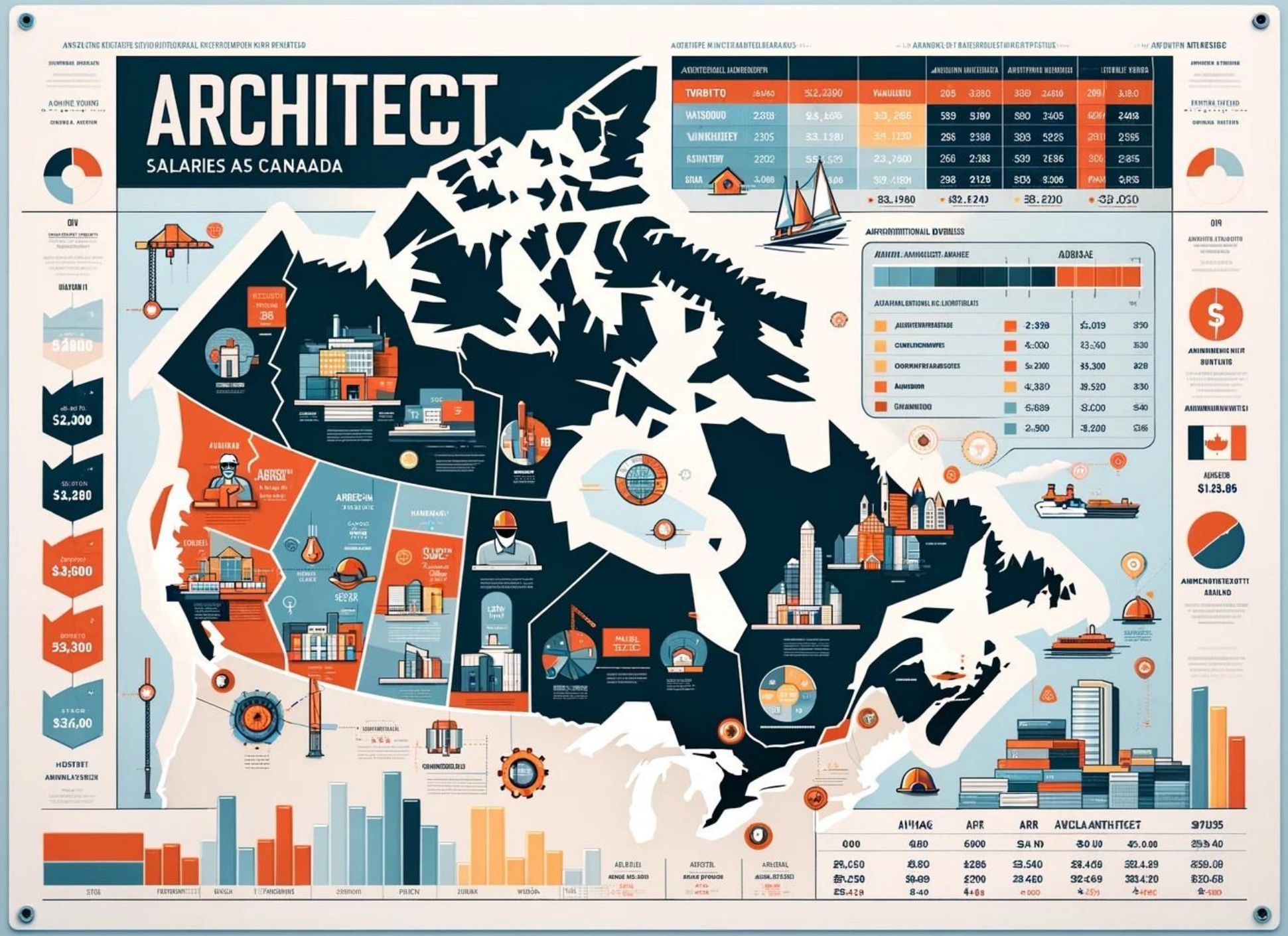
**ARCHITECTURAL DRAFTER**

Technical drawings



**NAVAL ARCHITECT**

Designing ships


ARCHITECT
SALARIES AS CANADA

Architecture is provincially/territorially regulated (11 bodies under ROAC)

Title "Architect" and sealing drawings restricted to licensed members (public protection)

National standards enable reciprocity

Key bodies:

ROAC (regulation),

In Canada, ROAC stands for the **Regulatory Organizations of Architecture in Canada**, a national group of the 11 provincial and territorial bodies that license and regulate architects, working together to set national standards, protect the public, and ensure consistent qualification requirements for the profession across the country, as noted by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and other sources.

CACB (education certification),

In Canada, **CACB** stands for the **Canadian Architectural Certification Board**, the national body that assesses architecture graduates' education, accredits university programs, and certifies experienced foreign architects for entry into the profession, ensuring high standards for licensure across provinces. It evaluates academic credentials against Canada's Education Standard (CES) and provides pathways for international architects to get certified in Canada.

RAIC (advocacy)

The **Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC)** is Canada's national non-profit voice for architects, advocating for design excellence, ethical practice, and responsible architecture to enhance the built environment and quality of life in the country. It provides education, professional development (like the RAIC Syllabus for internationally trained architects), awards (like the Governor General's Medals), and resources for its members, including students, interns, and licensed architects.

**Architect Salary Overview – Canada (2025)**
**National Salary Levels by Experience**

| Experience Level | Typical Annual Salary (CAD) | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Entry Level (0–3 yrs) | $50,000–$70,000 | Starting salary range varies by firm & city. Architecture Courses |
| Mid-Career | $70,000–$100,000 | Experienced architects before senior leadership. Architecture Courses |
| Senior Architect | $120,000–$150,000+ | Leadership/Project lead roles. Architecture Courses |
| **National Average** | **$102,000** | Includes outliers. Architecture Courses |
| Hourly Rates (Experienced / Specialist) | $45–$75+ | Can increase with specialization. |

## Average Salaries by Province & City

| Ontario | Average Annual Salary (CAD) |
|---|---|
| Ontario – overall | $108,432 |
| Toronto | $111,531 |
| Ottawa | $102,382 |
| Mississauga | $111,958 |
| Hamilton | $86,889 |
| London | $110,513 |
| Kitchener–Waterloo | ~$83,000 |

| British Columbia | Avg Annual Salary (CAD) |
|---|---|
| BC – overall | $99,465 |
| Vancouver | $106,797 |
| Richmond | $109,548 |
| Chilliwack | $98,058 |
| North Vancouver | $96,863 |
| Burnaby | $96,066 |
| Victoria | $92,231 |
| Surrey | $90,888 |
| Kelowna | $82,161 |

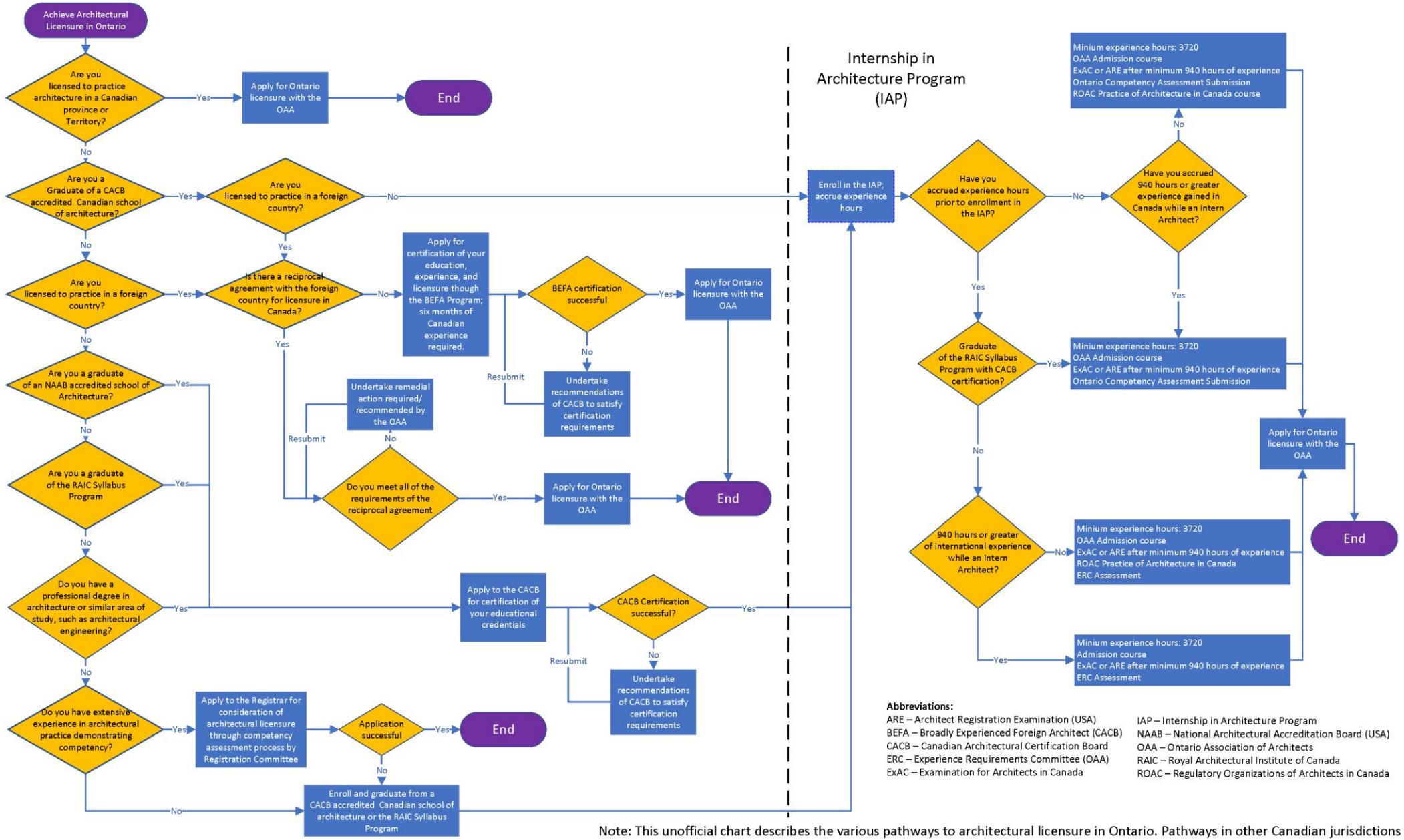
| Alberta | Avg Annual Salary (CAD) |
|---|---|
| Calgary | $122,900 |
| Edmonton | $119,700 |
| Red Deer | $103,900 |
| Lethbridge | $103,900 |
| Grande Prairie | $103,900 |

| Quebec | Avg Annual Salary (CAD) |
|---|---|
| Montreal | $95,600 |
| Quebec City | $115,700 |
| Laval | $77,000 |
| Gatineau | $76,000 |
| Sherbrooke | $75,000 |

| Province | Avg Annual Salary (CAD) |
|---|---|
| Nova Scotia | $80,640 |
| Saskatchewan | $78,000 |
| Manitoba | $76,000 |
| Newfoundland & Labrador | $85,459 |

# Architectural Licensure Process in Ontario – post January 1, 2025

Donald Ardiel Updated: 2025-07-09




**Abbreviations:**

ARE – Architect Registration Examination (USA)
BEFA – Broadly Experienced Foreign Architect (CACB)
CACB – Canadian Architectural Certification Board
ERC – Experience Requirements Committee (OAA)
ExAC – Examination for Architects in Canada
IAP – Internship in Architecture Program
NAAB – National Architectural Accreditation Board (USA)
OAA – Ontario Association of Architects
RAIC – Royal Architectural Institute of Canada
ROAC – Regulatory Organizations of Architects in Canada

Note: This unofficial chart describes the various pathways to architectural licensure in Ontario. Pathways in other Canadian jurisdictions may vary. It is provided for information purposes and should not be interpreted as an authoritative source.

**Education**

- Master of Architecture (M.Arch) from CACB-accredited program (most common path)
- Alternatives: RAIC Syllabus; Foreign degrees via CACB certification or BEFA
- Meets Canadian Education Standard (CES): design, history/theory, technical systems, professional practice
- Automatic certification for accredited Canadian programs (Include list of accredited programs or CACB logo)

**Experience (Internship in Architecture Program – IAP)**

- Minimum **3,720 hours** (typically 3–4 years) under licensed architect
- Tracked via Canadian Experience Record Book (CERB)
- Breakdown:
  - Design & Construction Documents: min. 2,200 hours
  - Construction Administration: min. 320 hours
  - Management: min. 200 hours
  - Additional flexible hours across categories
- Requires Supervisor (employer) + Mentor
- Eligible for ExAC after 2,800 hours

**Examination (ExAC)**

- Examination for Architects in Canada: 4 sections over 2 days
- Tests competency in: Programming/Design, Documents, Bidding/Administration, Management
- Administered annually
- 3 attempts allowed

**Licensure & The Stamp**

•Apply to provincial/territorial regulator

•Gain right to use title "Architect" and seal drawings

| ExAC Heading | Main Role | Core Competency |
|---|---|---|
| Programming, Planning & Practice | Define & govern the project | Legal, ethical, managerial judgment |
| Site Planning & Design | Contextual and spatial design | Urban, environmental, safety logic |
| Building Systems | Technical integration | Structural, mechanical, envelope performance |
| Construction Documents & Services | Build and deliver | Documentation, contracts, construction oversight |

## 1. Programming, Planning & Practice

**Focus**

This section tests the architect's ability to **define the project**, manage the professional process, and act responsibly within legal and ethical frameworks.

**Main topics**

- Client–architect agreements (CCDC contracts, RAIC documents)
- Scope of services
- Project delivery methods (DBB, DB, IPD, PPP)
- Professional liability and insurance
- Ethics and professional conduct
- Regulatory environment (zoning, planning approvals)
- Risk management
- Feasibility studies and programming

**You must be able to:**

- Structure a professional services contract
- Identify legal and ethical risks
- Select appropriate delivery methods
- Protect the public interest

## 2. Site Planning & Design

**Focus**

This section assesses the architect's ability to **respond to context**, including physical, social, environmental, and regulatory conditions.

**Main topics**

- Site analysis (climate, topography, access, utilities)
- Urban design principles
- Environmental impact
- Accessibility (barrier-free design)
- Life safety and egress planning
- Sustainable site strategies

**You must be able to:**

- Analyze and interpret site constraints
- Integrate building into urban and environmental context
- Ensure accessibility, safety, and sustainability

## 3. Building Systems

**Focus**

This section tests your understanding of **technical systems** that make buildings function safely and efficiently.

**Main topics**

- Structural systems (steel, concrete, timber)
- Mechanical systems (HVAC, ventilation)
- Electrical systems (power, lighting, emergency systems)
- Fire protection systems
- Acoustics
- Vertical transportation
- Envelope performance

**You must be able to:**

- Select appropriate systems for building type and climate
- Coordinate consultants' work
- Ensure compliance with codes and standards

## 4. Construction Documents & Services

**Focus**

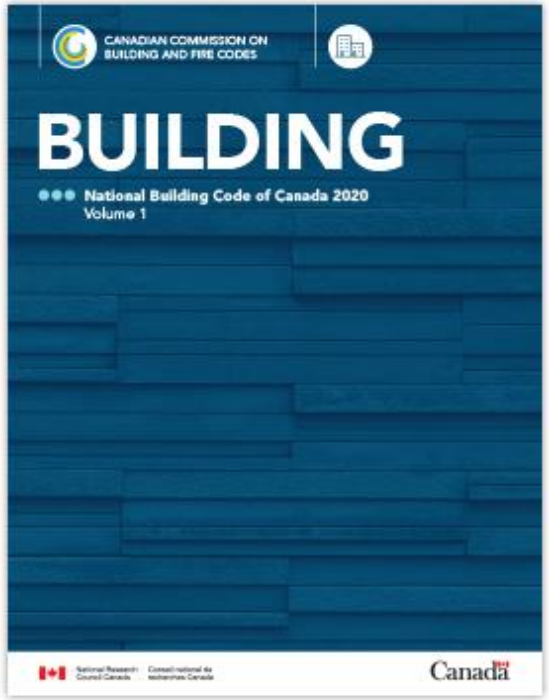
This section evaluates your ability to **translate design into buildable instructions** and manage construction responsibly.

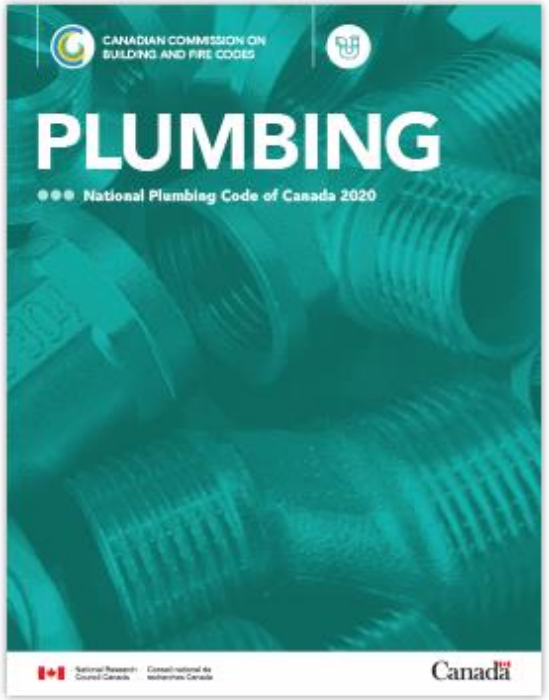
**Main topics**

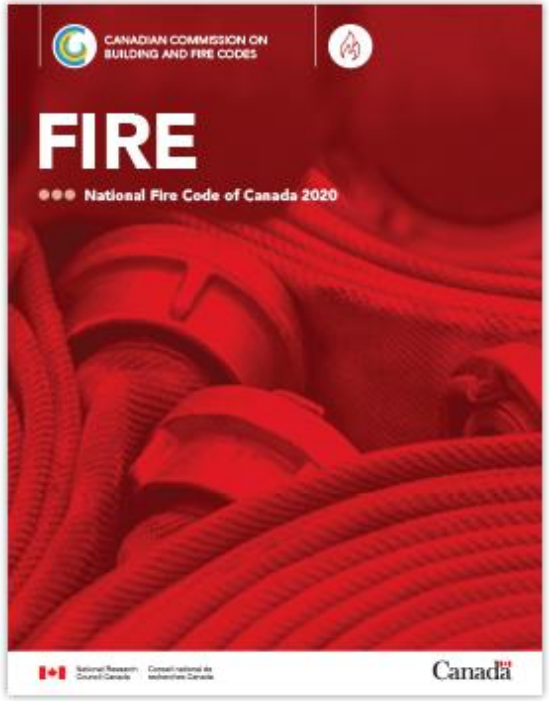
- Drawing and specification standards
- Detail coordination
- Bidding and tendering
- Construction contracts
- Site visits and field reviews
- Change orders
- Substantial performance and close-out

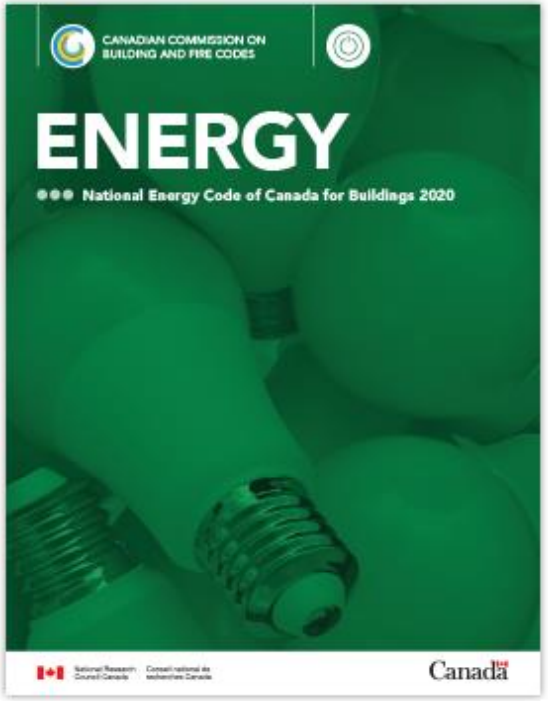
**You must be able to:**

- Produce coordinated documents
- Administer construction contracts
- Manage changes, claims, and deficiencies
- Protect client and public interests during construction



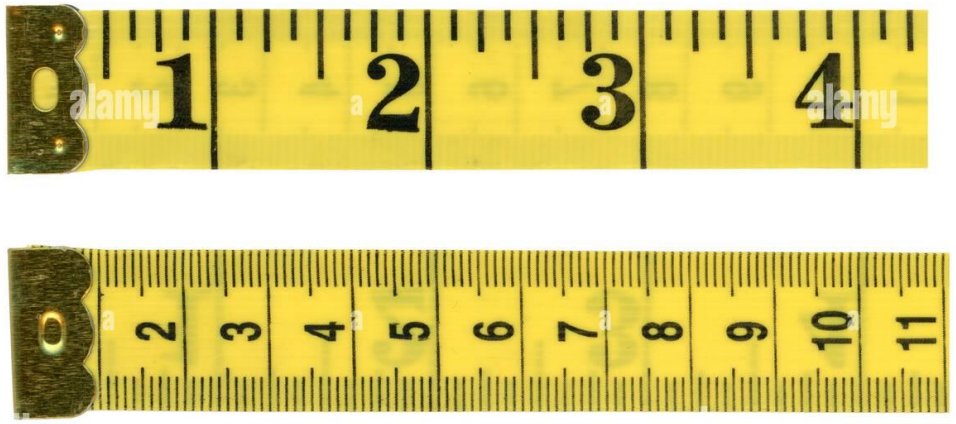



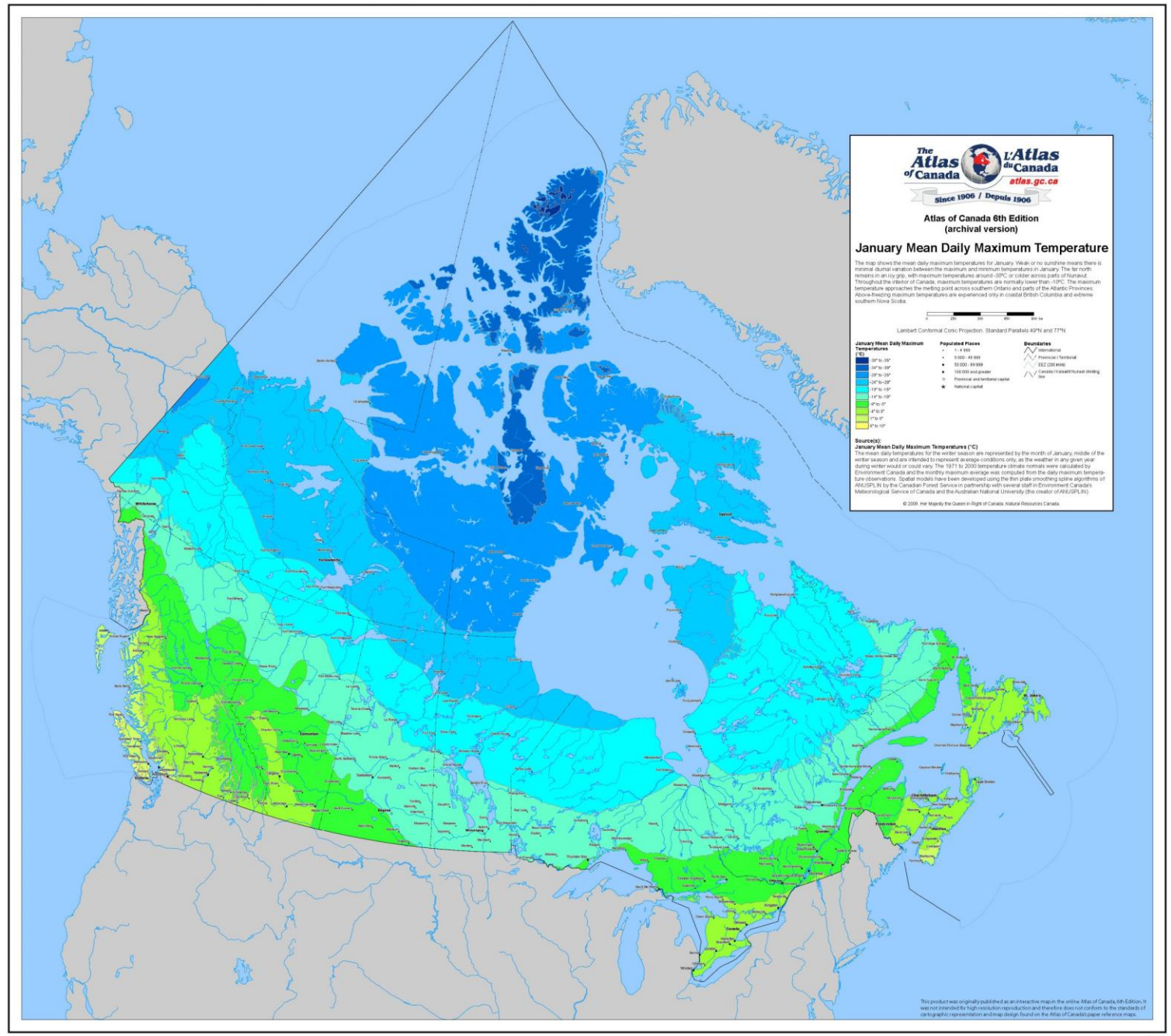

https://nrc-publications.canada.ca/eng/search/?q=NRCCode&q=&q=&ps=50&s=dtp&m=1

- Model code developed by the Canadian Board for Harmonized Construction Codes (published by NRC)
- Sets minimum requirements for **new construction, alterations, change of use, and demolition**
- Addresses: Safety, health, accessibility, fire/structural protection, environmental protection
- **Not** federal law — provinces/territories adopt it (often with amendments)
- Latest: **NBC 2025** (significant updates from 2020 edition)

**Part 1**: General (application, referenced standards)
**Part 2**: Structural design (wait — actually Part 4 is structural; correct as per standard)
**Part 3**: Use & occupancy classification
**Part 4**: Structural design (engineers + architects collaborate)
**Part 5**: Environmental separation (envelopes, moisture)
**Part 6**: Heating, ventilating, air-conditioning
**Part 7**: Plumbing services
**Part 8**: Sewage systems

**Part 9**: Housing & small buildings (<3 storeys, ≤600 m²)






Natural Resources Canada Ressources naturelles Canada

Canada

- Architecture in Canada is **not only a design discipline** but a **regulated profession operating inside a legal framework**.
- Bylaws exist to protect:
  - Public safety
  - Environmental quality
  - Urban order
  - Social equity (e.g., accessibility, housing standards)

***Municipal regulations controlling land use, building, safety***

Bylaws are **municipal laws** passed by city councils under authority granted by provincial legislation.

They:

- Regulate how land can be used
- Regulate what can be built
- Regulate how buildings must perform for safety and health

Distinguish:

- **Bylaws** = enforceable legal rules
- **Guidelines** = advisory or best practice (not legally binding)

Examples:

- Zoning bylaw
- Property standards bylaw
- Tree protection bylaw
- Noise bylaw

## Zoning Bylaws

***Use, density, height, setbacks***

Zoning regulates **what kind of building is allowed on a site**.

- Land use (residential, commercial, industrial, mixed-use)
- Density (FSI, FAR, lot coverage)
- Height limits
- Setbacks and building envelope

why:

- Controls urban form
- Protects sunlight, privacy, infrastructure capacity
- Prevents incompatible uses

Architects must:

- Read zoning maps and schedules
- Check compliance before designing

## Development Permits

***Approval before construction***

- No construction can begin without permits.
- Typical approvals:
  - Zoning compliance
  - Site plan approval
  - Building permit

Architects act as:

- Document preparers
- Code compliance verifiers
- Liaison between client and authority

**Accessibility**

***Barrier-free requirements***

Accessibility is not optional — it is legally required.

Covers:

- Entrances
- Washrooms
- Elevators
- Wayfinding
- Parking

•Universal design

•Human rights dimension

•Legal liability if ignored

**Fire and Safety**

***Fire code compliance***

Fire bylaws regulate:

- Means of egress
- Fire separation
- Sprinklers
- Fire alarms
- Emergency lighting

**Approval Process**

***Concept → zoning → permits → construction***

**linear governance process**:

1.Concept
2.Feasibility
3.Zoning analysis
4.Permit submission
5.Construction
6.Inspection

# Recommendation

Software


AI

Path to follow

**Main References:**

roac.ca
cacb.ca
exac.ca
raic.org
Canadian Handbook of Practice (CHOP)
architecturecourses.org

Thank you!