

GUIDELINES FOR THE PROVISION OF SEASONAL HOUSING FOR MIGRANT FARM WORKERS IN BC

This document is intended to assist local municipalities and /or regional districts in assessing the suitability of housing intended for both domestic and migrant farm workers in BC.

These guidelines are adapted from recommendations developed through consultation among federal agencies, Ontario provincial ministries and industry representatives involved in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP).

These guidelines are designed to assist in meeting legislative and regulatory requirements and are not to be used as a replacement for specific legislative or regulatory requirements.

A: Structure

1. General

- Buildings to be used as housing for migrant workers should be located in well drained ground at least 100 feet (30.48m) from any building used or intended to be used for sheltering animals or for poultry husbandry likely to cause offensive environmental conditions or other environmental conditions that may be hazardous to health.

2. Construction

Buildings to be used as housing for migrant farm workers should be weather proof and so constructed that:

- Floors are tight fitting, smooth-surfaced, impervious to moisture and readily cleanable.
- Walls extend at least 7 feet (2.13m) to a maximum of 2.44 m (8 ft.) above floor level, are tight fitting and the interior is lined with a smooth painted or treated surface material. Walls may be higher, but 2.44 m (8 ft.) will be used for calculation of airspace in the sleeping areas.
- Roofs are tight-fitting and waterproof.
- Adequate lighting and ventilation are provided at all times by either natural or artificial means or a combination of these.
- Where insect populations are a concern, screens on all openings to the outside are provided from the first day of May through to the first day of November.
- Total useable floor area of at least 7.44 m² (80 sq.ft.) per person with a minimum of 8.5 m³ (300 cu.ft.) of air space per person in the sleeping area. The floor area in the washrooms is not considered useable living area and will not be included in the calculation of useable floor area.
- A minimum temperature of 20°C (68°F) can be maintained.
- Safety hazards are eliminated and housing is detached from any building where highly inflammable materials are used or stored.
- Where combustion-type stoves or heaters are used, they should be connected to exhaust flues of an approved design.
- Mobile homes should have skirting (rodent control).
- Industrial camp trailers should be CSA approved.
- The current British Columbia Building Code, a regulation made under the Province of British Columbia, applies to all new construction and renovations or additions to existing buildings. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that such construction is in compliance with the Code. This document does not identify all applicable provisions of the British Columbia Building Code. Contact the municipal building department in your area for additional information.

B: Sleeping Facilities

1. Bunkhouses

When a building to be used as housing for migrant farm workers is in the form of a bunkhouse:

Each bunk should be:

- Separate and sleep only one person.
- At least 30.28cm (12 inches) above the floor.
- Provided with a clean mattress and pillow of sound construction.
- At least 46 cm (18 inches) apart from the next bunk when not lying lengthwise along the walls.
- Provided with one storage unit for personal items (i.e. dresser drawers, locker and/or shelf for each bunk, or the equivalent).
- Provided with a minimum of 8.5 m³ (300 cu. ft.) of airspace per person.
- A supply of clean blankets, sheets and pillowcases must be provided upon arrival

2. Family Housing

When a building's intended use as housing for migrant workers is in the form of family housing, there should be:

- A maximum occupancy rate of one person per 7.44 m² (80 sq.ft.) of total useable floor area.
- At least 8.5 m³ (300 cu.ft.) of airspace per person in sleeping rooms.
- A kitchen with food storing, preparing and cooking facilities should be provided and this space should not be used as a sleeping room.
- Basic furnishing such as tables, chairs and beds compatible with the maximum occupancy.
- Sleeping areas should be partitioned from other living areas.

C: Washroom Facilities and Sewage Disposal

- Fly-tight, weatherproof, well-ventilated toilet accommodation should be provided for every 10 occupants, or part thereof.
- Constant supply of hot and cold potable water.
- One sink or washbasin for every seven occupants.
- One shower for every ten occupants.
- Toilet facilities must have suitable privacy barriers.
- A supply of toilet tissues should be provided upon arrival.
- Flush toilets are to be kept in good repair and operate efficiently.
- Portable privies should be under a service contract and must be equipped with hand sanitation facilities such as wet wipe/alcohol solution.
- All sewage is to be disposed of according to the provisions of the appropriate regulatory agency.

D: Occupancy Calculation

Occupancy of a facility is to be calculated on the lesser number of:

- 8.5 m³ (300 cu.ft.) per person in a sleeping area.
- 7.44 m² (80 sq.ft.) per person of total useable floor area which includes living and sleeping areas but does not include washrooms.
- 1 washbasin for every 7 occupants
- 1 shower for every 10 occupants
- 1 toilet facility for every 10 occupants

Note: Living, sleeping, kitchen and washroom facilities can be located in separate buildings but need to be conveniently located for easy access.

E: Laundry Facilities

- At least one laundering machine in good working order for every fifteen bunks or the equivalent
- Drying facilities for laundry
- Or, access to a Laundromat once per week

F: Water Supply

- Housing for migrant farm workers shall be provided with a readily available supply of hot and cold water that is bacteriologically safe, under pressure and in sufficient quantity to provide for drinking, washing, food preparation and laundering. Water supplies that are bacteriologically unsatisfactory are to be equipped with a mechanical disinfection device, i.e. chlorinator, UV light.
- When drinking water is provided in a container, it should be bacteriologically safe, the container should be clean, sanitary, covered and equipped with a sanitary dispensing device.
- No person should use a drinking vessel in common with others.

G: Food

- Food should be stored so that it is protected from contamination.
- All perishable foods are to be stored in adequate refrigeration to maintain a temperature not exceeding 4°C (40°F).

1. Meals Provided

- No cups, glasses or dishes that are chipped or cracked should be supplied/used in the preparation, service or storage of food.
- Facilities to be supplied for washing dishes/utensils in water at a temperature of not less than 43°C (110°F) containing a detergent solution capable of removing all grease and food particles, etc.
- Dishes/utensils to be sanitized by an acceptable method and dried by exposure to air.

- Equipment and appliances in the food preparation and dining areas should be constructed as to permit the maintenance of these areas in a clean and sanitary condition.
- Kitchen and dining areas should be kept free from material and equipment that are not regularly used in a kitchen or a dining area.

2. **Meals not provided**

- Food storage and refrigeration facilities shall be provided.
- Provide an adequate:
 - Amount of kitchenware (plates, cups, bowls, knives, forks, spoons, etc.)
 - Number of pots and pans
 - Stoves / 2 burner hotplates: 1 unit (2 burners)/ 4-5 workers
 - Refrigerators: 1 unit / 6 workers
 - Amount of cupboard and food storage space
 - Number of kitchen tables(s) and chairs and,
 - Number of utensils for cooking and serving food for the number of people being housed.

H: Garbage Control

- Rodent and insect proof garbage containers that can readily be cleaned and sanitized should be provided for all buildings used for housing migrant farm workers and in sufficient quantity to store all garbage accumulated between collections.
- Containers should be clearly labeled in English and the language of the workers.
- Garbage should be collected and removed for sanitary disposal at least once every week.

I: Safety

- Buildings used for housing migrant farm workers should have fire protection facilities compatible with the provisions of the BC Building Code & Fire Code.
- Buildings used for housing migrant farm workers and their surroundings should be free from any chemical substance or condition that may become hazardous to the occupants.
- Fire extinguisher to be fully charged and have a recent certificate that they have been recharged, properly located, securely mounted. Minimum requirement is ABC rating. (Note: This is a safety protocol and not necessarily an issue for compliance with the Fire Code).
- Smoke alarm(s) are to be provided, properly located, operational and securely mounted. (Note: This is a safety protocol and not necessarily an issue for compliance with the Fire Code).