

Ontario Building Code app now provides customized user experience

Jan. 2, 2021



Construction professionals need to make numerous decisions while carrying out their responsibilities, many of which are guided by the Ontario Building Code (OBC). Even for those who are very familiar with the OBC, this immense and complex document can be difficult to navigate. And if you've ever tried to lug that enormous binder to a jobsite or had to manually swap out pages when an update is issued, you know how cumbersome and inconvenient it can be.

While COVID-19 has been a challenge for everyone, some positive things have resulted from the pandemic. For example, it has highlighted the need for – and accelerated – many digital initiatives. One such initiative is a product called My Building Code – a digital version of the OBC that has been developed to ease the pain points experienced by users of the Code by delivering it via a web and mobile application.

Access anywhere

The My Building Code app is available via a website for convenient reference from your computer while in the office. It's also available as an app for iOS and Android devices, so you can download

it onto your smartphone and tablet for easy access when you are on the road and at jobsites. The bottom line? Easy access to relevant regulations anytime, anywhere, on any device.

Easy navigation

One of the main benefits of having the Code available digitally is that it makes navigation and interpretation quick and easy. For example, there is a search function that lets you search the entire Code for any regulations relevant to your search term. You will also find defined terms identified in *italics*, which conveniently pop up with a full definition to give you clarification in-situ.

Customized experience

You can customize your interface with features such as bookmarks for sections that you refer to frequently. Bookmarks are just the first of many customizations that you will be able to make; future releases of the product will include the ability to add your own comments and notes on sections of the Code. The best part? Your preferences are saved to your profile and synchronized on all of your devices so you can see everything from your desktop, phone and tablet.

Automated updates

You may have found that updating your OBC binder can be labour intensive when amendments are issued and need to be inserted into the binder in the appropriate spots. This process can take hours, and many Code users choose to simply order a whole new binder instead of updating their old one. But while that may save time, it certainly doesn't save the environment. The new app keeps you synchronized with the latest version of the building code in real time with no manual work. That's a plus for you *and* the environment.

Influence the future

While My Building Code is one of the first digital code experiences for the construction industry, the product developers are working to expand their offering to other provincial and national building codes, as well as other codes such as fire and electrical. Right now, the app is available for free so that you can try it out, provide feedback and make suggestions for future product enhancements and codes to include. User feedback has already influenced the product with navigation improvements and new features like the bookmarks function described above.

Another popular request is for Volume 2 of the OBC to be included. The team is working hard to deliver this in an upcoming release. Other features currently in development include the ability to set up projects and invite colleagues to share sections of the code, discuss regulations and collaborate in real time; and linking of content to allow you to open cross-referenced sections, redirections and exceptions in new tabs. There will also be handy tools such as the ability to view GIS-based information and calculators to determine design specifications.

While the base product will always be free, there will eventually be a subscription fee for enhanced features. Take advantage of the free version today. Visit mybuildingcode.com for links to the browser version and to download the app for your tablet or smartphone.