

BUILDERS CODE EXPANSION: FIRST ADVISOR NOW AVAILABLE TO VANCOUVER ISLAND CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYERS Industry Seeks to Improve Retention of Skilled Tradeswomen by Addressing Worksite Behaviour

VICTORIA, BC (March 19, 2019) – Construction employers who want to address diversity or harassment issues on their worksites but lack the human resources personnel or expertise to do so will now have access to confidential advisors with experience in HR management, mediation and conflict resolution as part of the Builders Code recently launched by the BC Construction Association and project partners.

Across the province, more than 23,000 construction companies have 20 employees or less. Builders Code Advisors will serve as expert coaches for BC construction employers as they strive to increase diversity and retention of tradeswomen on job sites that are typically 95% male. The goal is to assist employers in resolving situations fairly, quickly, and productively for all parties, and in the process to improve the employer's ability to confidently communicate expectations and manage such situations independently in future.

“As the Builders Code was being developed, it became very clear that most construction employers want to improve the culture on their worksites but as small businesses are operating without the knowledge, skills or resources they need” said Chris Atchison, President, BCCA. “The Builders Code helps bridge that gap and improve safety and productivity on B.C. worksites.”

The first Builders Code Advisor to be announced is Jessi Dhanju, who will serve the Vancouver Island region. Jessi has most recently worked in the University of Victoria's Equity and Human Rights office undertaking departmental investigations, and liaising with the UVic's general counsel for the planning, managing and monitoring of internal and external departmental needs.

The Builders Code Advisors are part of a comprehensive suite of tools for employers that aim to improve the retention of tradespeople by recognizing that every person working on a worksite is affected by stress and distraction caused by bullying, hazing and harassment. It's expected that by demonstrating the benefits of an improving worksite culture and providing employers with the tools they need to affect change, retention rates will increase and help to offset B.C.'s projected skilled labour shortage.

Project partners BC Construction Safety Alliance (BCCSA) and BCCA Employee Benefits Trust (EBT) will work closely with the Builders Code Advisors to integrate their services into the operational supports these organizations already provide to BC's construction employers, related to health and wellness benefits and safety training and advice.

“When you consider the significant role stress and distraction play in worksite accidents, it's clear that hazing, harassment and bullying are important safety issues,” said Michael McKenna, Executive Director, BCCSA. “As an organization that provides straightforward and practical assistance to help contractors meet their health and safety needs and requirements, the Builders Code Advisors will be an essential component of the services and training we offer construction employers.”

“Our mission is to be an innovative provider of employee benefits to our clients, so that they can recruit, protect and retain their talented people,” added Arthur Chung, CEO, EBT. “We're incredibly excited that there will be much needed support to empower construction industry employers to build a safe and inclusive work culture. Having a Builders Code Advisor in place marks the culmination of the extensive dedication and hard work put in by all of the partners on the Builders Code project.”

Among the construction employers embracing the Builders Code and using its resources is Bricklok, a Victoria-based surfacing and landscaping company that has over 50 employees and is in the process of hiring 10 more. After 30 years in a physical labour position at Bricklok, John Connors has moved into an HR and office/management role and

has recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce as one of his goals.

“Builders Code is custom made for companies like Bricklok because, while I can run any jobsite you want to put me on, with HR issues I’m a little out of my depth,” said Connors. “I understand people and I understand the need for clear diversity policies that we can all understand and support, but I’m not an HR expert. The Builders Code free policies provide real value, and having Jessi available to advise will make it easier to take information from the website to the worksite.”

“I look forward to sharing my expertise with Bricklok and other construction employers on Vancouver Island,” said Dhanju. “Oftentimes, it can be difficult to recognize and navigate hazing, harassment and bullying situations. The Builders Code is here for employers looking to improve their worksite culture and provide the safest and most productive environment they can.”

The Builders Code is an initiative of the Construction Workforce Equity Project, funded by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training through the Sector Labour Market Partnership Program. Builders Code partners include: BCCA, BCCSA, BCCAEBT, Industry Training Association (ITA), WorkSafeBC, Minerva Foundation of B.C., LNG Canada, Four Regional Construction Associations (NRCA, SICA, VICA, VRCA). Throughout 2019, additional Builders Code resources and services will be rolled out including training and additional Builders Code Advisors in every region of the province.

About British Columbia Construction Association

The British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) works with four Regional Construction Associations (NRCA, SICA, VICA and VRCA) to serve more than 10,000 employers in the provinces industrial, commercial, institutional (ICI) construction industry. BCCA’s programs and services include employee benefits (BCCA Employee Benefits), technology tools for bid and project management (BidCentral), and employment programs (Skilled Trades Employment Program (STEP), Integrating Newcomers, LNG Canada Trades Training Fund, LNG Canada Connect). BCCA advocates on behalf of all employers to ensure British Columbia’s construction sector remains productive and resilient.

For more information about BCCA, please visit: <https://www.bccasn.com/>

For more information about the Builders Code, please visit: www.builderscode.ca

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