

A Step-by-Step Guide to Transitioning Your Life, Vehicles, and Utilities to B.C.



Phase 1: 2 to 3 Months Before Move-In

During this initial phase, focus on gathering provincial documentation, securing highly competitive spots in local infrastructure, and auditing your inventory for B.C.'s distinct climate zones.

- **ICBC Driver & Insurance Records**
 - Request your official **driving record (driver's abstract)** from your current licensing province.
 - Obtain a **claims history letter** from your current auto insurance provider. *B.C.'s sole auto insurer (ICBC) requires these documents to calculate your insurance premium discount.*
- **School District & Catchment Planning**
 - Use the local school district's online locator tool to identify your designated neighborhood catchment school.
 - Gather child birth certificates, legal guardianship papers, immunization records, and your signed lease or purchase agreement (required as proof of residency for registration).
- **Childcare Waitlist Registration**
 - Submit applications to licensed daycare and preschool providers in your target neighborhood immediately.
 - Prioritize facilities registered under the **Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI)** or the provincial **\$10 a Day ChildCareBC** program.
- **Strata & Rental Bylaw Audit**
 - If moving into a condo, townhouse, or rental, obtain and read the specific **Strata Bylaws**.
 - Confirm strict local restrictions regarding pet size/quantity limits, vehicle height limitations in parkades, and scheduled moving-day elevator fees.



Phase 2: 1 Month Before Move-In

This phase is dedicated to setting up your essential services and securing critical transit links to prevent any service gaps upon arrival.

- **BC Hydro (Electricity) Account Setup**
 - Register a new account or schedule a transfer online. Ensure the connection date matches your official possession or lease start date.
- **FortisBC (Natural Gas) Account Setup**

- Set up a separate natural gas account online if your new home uses gas for heating, hot water, or cooking appliances. *(Unlike other provinces, electricity and gas are typically managed by separate entities in B.C.)*
- **Canada Post Mail Forwarding**
 - Purchase a **12-month mail forwarding service** to redirect mail originating from out-of-province.
 - Update your address across all personal, financial, and employment portals using the standard B.C. postal format: **A1A 1A1**.
- **BC Ferries Vehicle Reservations**
 - If your route to your new home involves travel to Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, or the Gulf Islands, book your vehicle reservation immediately. *Peak weekend and holiday sailings sell out weeks in advance.*
- **Veterinary Clinic Registration**
 - Contact clinics in your target neighborhood to register your pet. Due to systemic veterinary shortages across B.C., many clinics have active multi-month waitlists.



Phase 3: Arrival & Your First Week

Complete these legally mandated tasks and local utility configurations within your first ten days in the province.

- **ICBC Driver's License Update** *(Mandatory within 90 days)*
 - Book an in-person appointment at an ICBC driver licensing office.
 - Bring your old out-of-province license, two accepted forms of identification, and your printed driver's abstract to surrender your old license and receive your new B.C. license.
- **Vehicle Registration & Autoplan Insurance** *(Mandatory within 30 days)*
 - Book a provincial safety inspection at an authorized facility if importing a vehicle from outside Western Canada (B.C., AB, SK, and MB are exempt under the New West Partnership).
 - Bring your vehicle, inspection certificate, current registration, and insurance history to an **ICBC Autoplan Broker** to get B.C. license plates.
- **BC Services Card & MSP Enrollment**
 - Apply online for the **Medical Services Plan (MSP)** the day you establish residency.
 - *Note:* B.C. has a waiting period consisting of the balance of your arrival month plus two full calendar months. Ensure your out-of-province health coverage remains active during this transition.
- **Metro Vancouver Transit Setup**
 - Purchase a blue **Compass Card** at any SkyTrain station or select retailer for integrated transit tap-on, tap-off capability.
- **Municipal Waste Program Setup**

- Download your city's local waste management calendar app (e.g., *VanConnect*, *MyWaste*) to follow local bi-weekly garbage schedules and strict organic recycling/compost sorting bylaws.