

Permit Issuers Training Guide for the New Home Buyer Protection Public Registry

Prepared by

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1 Introduction

Under the *New Home Buyer Protection Act*, a building permit cannot be issued unless appropriate warranty coverage or an authorization for exemption from the coverage requirement is in place on the property.

The *New Home Buyer Protection Act* applies to all new homes built where the building permit is applied for after February 1, 2014. In addition to new homes (as defined in the *Act*), the legislation also applies to substantial reconstruction, as well as manufactured homes (includes modular, ready-to, move, etc.). Owner-built homes and rental properties can be exempt from the requirement for warranty coverage; an application for exemption from the requirement must be submitted to the New Home Buyer Protection Office.

The purpose of this guide is to provide instruction for the use of the New Home Buyer Protection Public Registry, including processes for confirming coverage/authorization and retaining information for complying with verification requests. This guide is not a resource for interpretation of the legislation. Interpretive bulletins and other resources will be made available on topics such as determining substantial reconstruction and compliance requirements for manufactured homes. Contact the New Home Buyer Protection Office for more information.

2 Responsibilities of Permit Issuers

Permit issuers, which include accredited municipalities and accredited agencies acting on behalf of municipalities, have two primary responsibilities under the *Act*:

- Permit issuers must verify that appropriate warranty coverage or an authorization for exemption from the coverage requirement is in place before issuing a building permit.
- Permit issuers must be able to provide evidence of how and when verification of coverage or exemption was made for a particular building permit at the request of the new home buyer protection office.

A number of options for verifying warranty coverage or exemption are available to permit issuers. They can request that the builder provide a printed copy of the Registrar's proof of coverage or exemption; they can use the New Home Buyer Protection Public Registry search online; or they can combine both options. Simply supplying a New Home Buyer Protection System ID number (e.g., an RU or RF number) does not indicate proof of warranty. However, that ID can be used to confirm coverage through the online Public Registry (<http://homewarranty.alberta.ca/public-registry/>).

2.1 Printed Verification

Once a builder has been notified that a new home registration has been approved or an exemption has been authorized, a certificate confirming the approval or authorization can be downloaded and printed. Permit issuers can request that the certificate be presented before a building permit is issued.

The certificate will contain information about the builder and property that can be matched to the information provided on the permit application. This includes the following:

- Contact information for the builder
- Contact information for the warranty provider (if applicable)
- Registration Unit ID, Civic Address, Legal Description, and LINC Number for each property

The form will also contain the Registrar’s signature and official seal, as well as the date of approval or authorization. An RF or RU number alone does not constitute proof of warranty but can be cross-checked with the information provided on the certificate.

Figure 1 - Sample New Home Registry Approval Certificate



Alberta Government

Approved New Home Registration
New Home Buyer Protection Office

New Home Buyer Protection Office
Alberta Municipal Affairs
10th Floor, Commerce Place
10155 - 102 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L4
Tel 1-866-421-6628
Fax 780-427-2538

Registration Form ID: 14RF1115326
Status: Approved
Approval Date: 2014-01-08

Builder: Amistar Construction Ltd.
Address: 2345 3452 Avenue, Edmonton, T6J 0R3
Phone Number: 888-888-8888
Website:

Warranty Provider: Progressive Warranty Home Solutions
Phone Number: 866-690-8977
Website: www.progressivewarranty.com

Property Information

Property 1
Property Type: Single Detached Home
Total Number of Units: 1
Warrantable Common Property: No
Additional Warranty on Building Envelope: Yes

Registration Unit ID	Civic Address	Legal Description	LINC
14RU1116863	234 546 Avenue NW, Banff, T4J 3N0	345-653N-24356 Lot/Block/Plan 13-100-B-W4 ATS Standard	

New Home Buyer Protection Approved on 2013-12-05



Registrar

This remains on record as compliance or non-compliance with provisions of the New Home Buyers Protection Act and Regulations. Pursuant to the New Home Buyers Protection Act, the "Owner Builder" and/ or the "Residential Builder" are responsible for meeting the requirements of the Act.

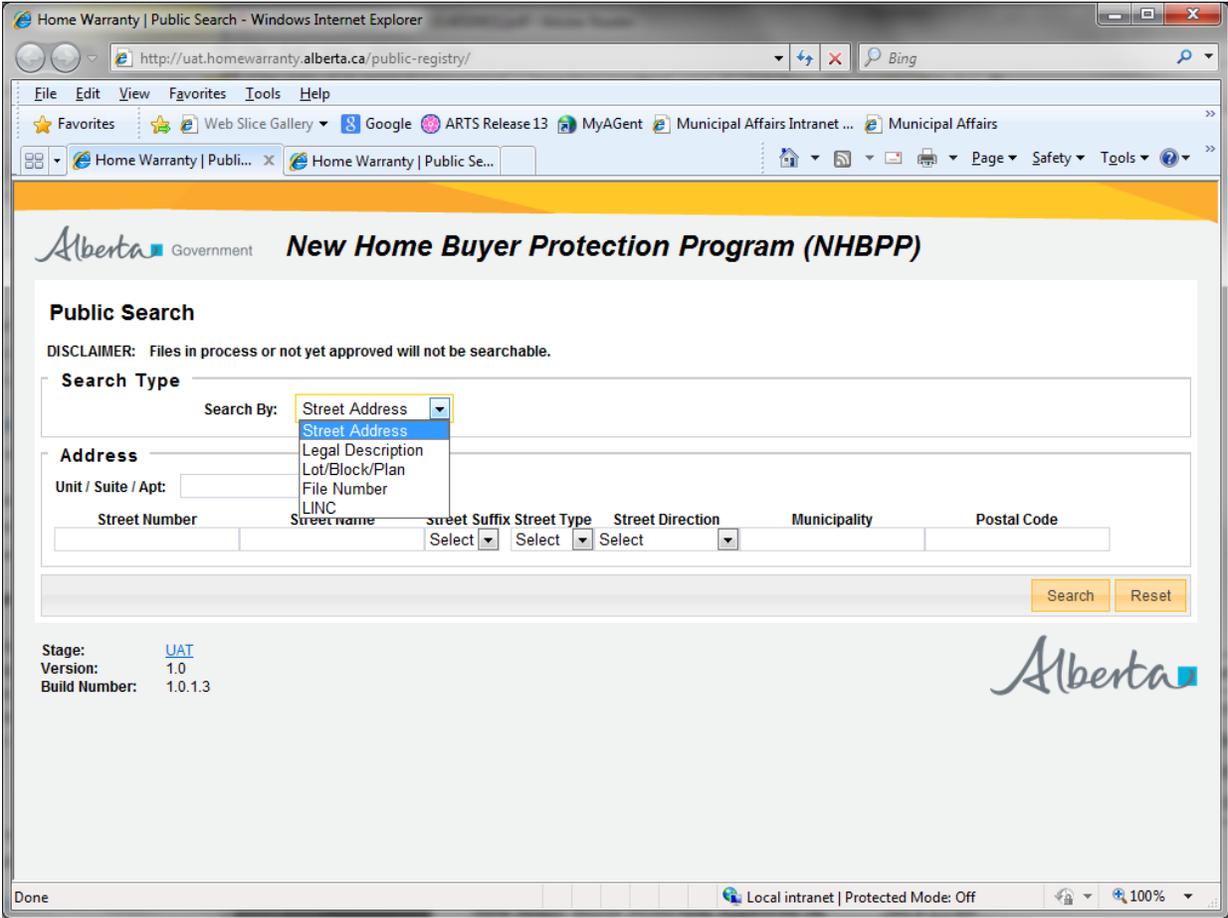
At the permit issuer’s discretion, the certificate can be filed with the application. We recommend that permit issuers who keep the certificate on file record the date that the certificate was received somewhere on the document.

2.2 Using the Public Registry

Permit issuers can verify coverage or exemption online by searching the public registry.

Five options are available for searching the registry. Users can search by street address, legal land description, lot/block/plan, LINC number, or file number (equivalent to the Registration Unit ID on the certificate of approval/authorization). Permit issuers may use whatever search option is most convenient based on the information available for a particular permit application.

Figure 2 - Public Registry Search Options



To search the registry:

1. Use the dropdown menu to select a search method.
2. Enter the appropriate information in the fields provided. A red asterisk indicates required information.

- 3. When all available information has been entered, click the **Search** button.
- 4. The search results will show all entries matching the selection criteria to a maximum of 200 entries.

The search results will be displayed in a table below the search form. The entries in the search results table will contain all the information necessary for a permit issuer to verify warranty coverage or exemption authorization (See

Table 1 – Understanding the Search Results).

Figure 3 - Public Registry Search Results

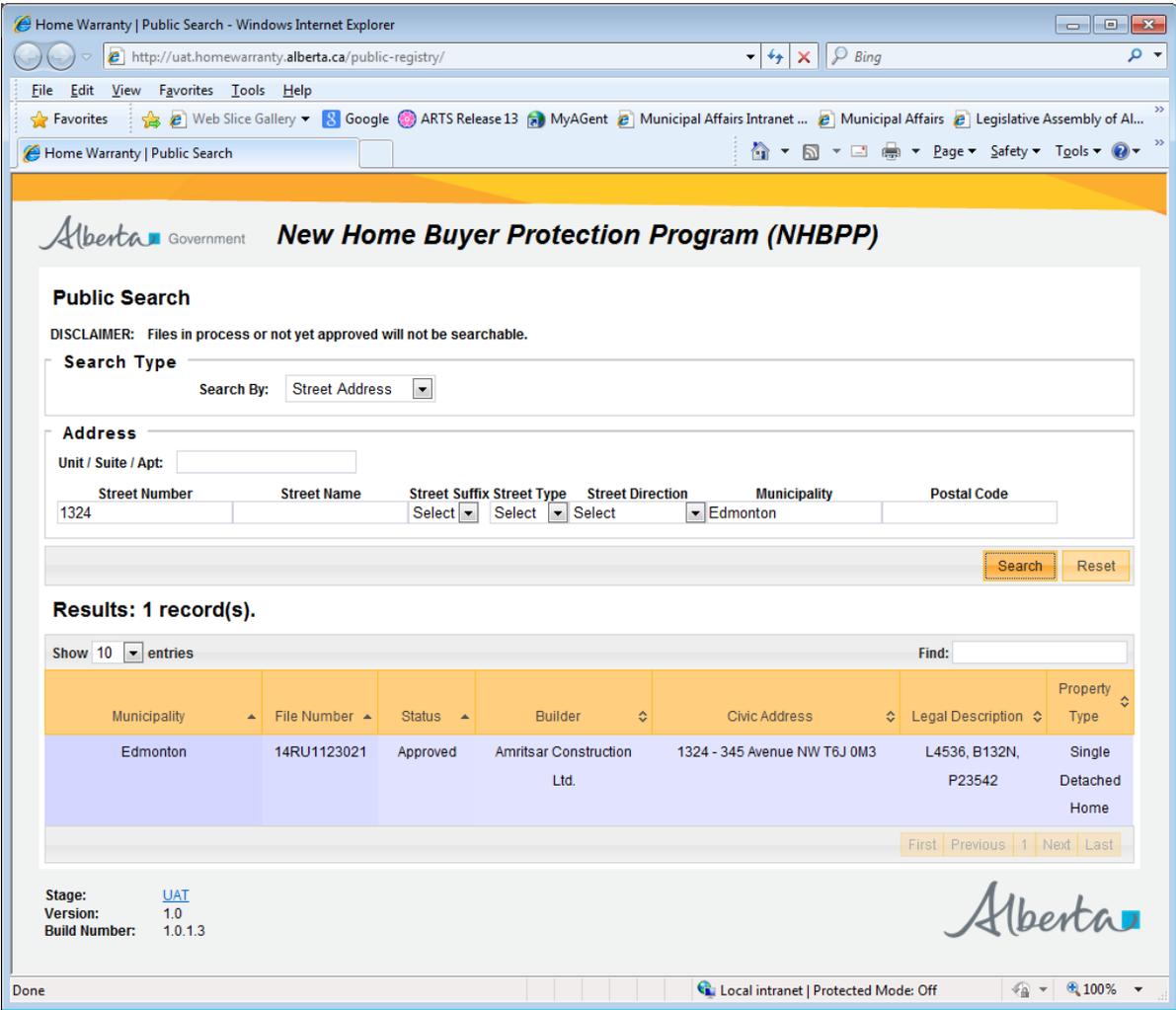


Table 1 – Understanding the Search Results

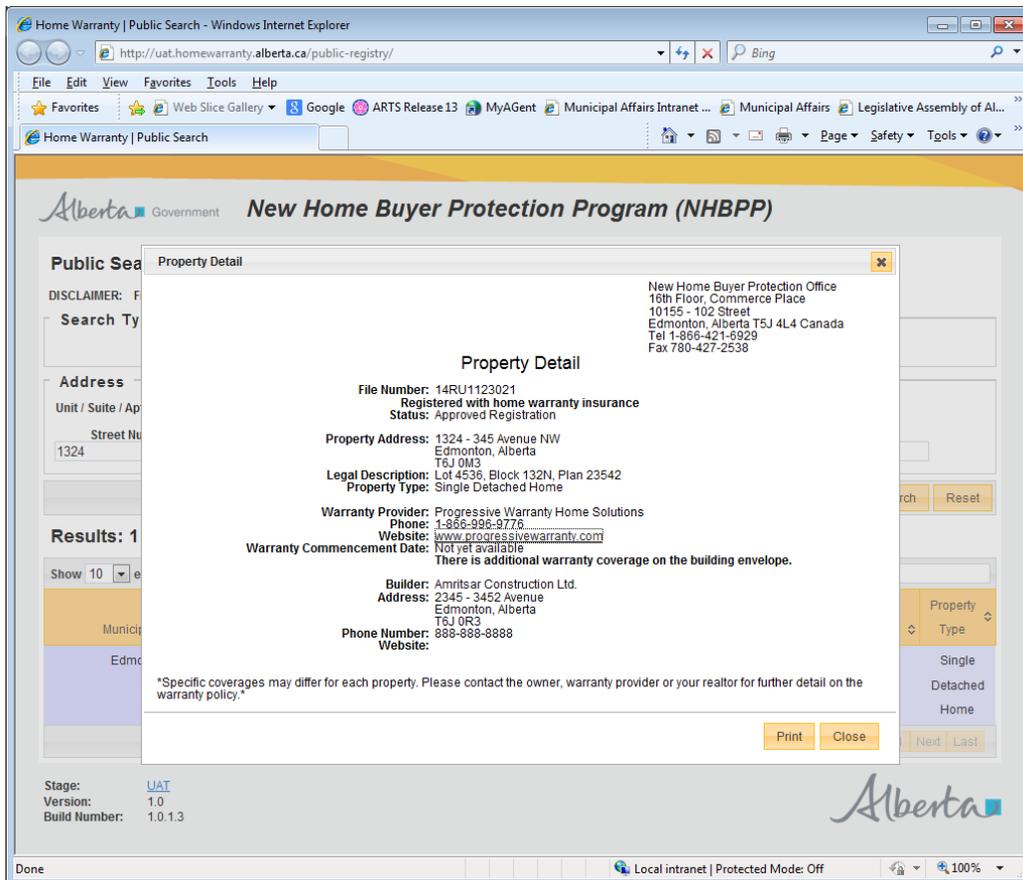
Column Name	Description
Municipality	The city, town, village, or other municipality type in which the property is located.
File Number	The reference number for the property within the New Home Buyer Protection Public Registry. “File Number” is equivalent to the “Registration Unit ID” on the certificate of approval/authorization.
Status	“Approved” indicates that warranty coverage is in place; “Authorized” indicates that an exemption is in place. “Withdrawn” indicates that warranty coverage is no longer in place on the property.
Builder	The company name is shown for homes built by professional builders; “Owner-Built” indicates a home was built by the owner of the home.
Civic Address	Shows the street address information available for the property.
Legal Description	Contains the legal land description for the property in either the Alberta Township System or Lot/Block/Plan format.
Property Type	Indicates if the entry refers to a single detached home or a multi-unit property such as a duplex or condominium.

If the status of an entry is “Approved” or “Authorized”, a building permit can be issued. If the status of an entry is “Withdrawn” or the property cannot be found in the registry, a building permit cannot be issued. We recommend recording the file number of all entries for which a building permit is issued.

Clicking on an entry in the search results will open the Property Detail window for the entry. The property detail shows additional information available about the property, such as the warranty provider and contact information for the builder.

Note: The search results screen can be printed using your internet browser’s printing function. The Property Detail can be printed by clicking the **Print** button at the bottom right of the Property Detail window.

Figure 4 - Property Detail



2.3 Combining Both Options

While either of the verification options is acceptable, combining both provides the most assurance. One way to do this is to perform a file number search for the property in the public registry:

1. On the Public Search screen, select “File Number” from the “Search Type” dropdown list.
2. In the “File Number” field on the search form, enter the “Registration Unit ID” from the approval/authorization certificate.
3. Manually record the date that the status of the property was verified somewhere on the certificate.
4. File the certificate for future reference.

2.4 Providing Proof of Verification

At any time, the New Home Buyer Protection Office can request that a permit issuer provide evidence of how and when confirmation of coverage or exemption was made for a particular permit. This request might be made as part of the auditing process or as part of a compliance investigation.

Compliance issues for permit issuers include issuing building permits without verification of coverage or exemption. Compliance issues for builders include building a home without warranty coverage or an exemption, building a home with warranty coverage that does not meet the minimum requirements and other matters relevant to the act and supporting regulations.

Note: New Home Buyer Protection Office compliance officers do not investigate construction issues or perform technical inspections; their work does not replace or overlap with the role of safety codes officers.

Providing the file number and date of verification, a screenshot of the registry entry printed and dated by the permit issuer, or a printed and dated certificate confirming approval or authorization are all acceptable proof of verification when responding to an auditing or compliance request. Permit issuers who follow the recommended procedures for verifying coverage or exemption should have no difficulty providing proof of verification.

3 Learn More

Permit issuers who are uncertain about how the requirements of the *New Home Buyer Protection Act* apply to a particular permit application should contact the New Home Buyer Protection Office before issuing the building permit. Staff can assist with the interpretation of the requirement in situations such as determining substantial reconstruction. Permit applicants with questions about the *Act* should be directed to the New Home Buyer Protection Office website or information line.

Table 2 - New Home Buyer Protection Office Contact Information

Website:	www.HomeWarranty.alberta.ca
Information Line:	1-866-421-6929
Email:	HomeWarranty.inquiries@gov.ab.ca