ARCHITECTURAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Practice Guideline: Hourly Rate Fees – Services of Principals or Staff

September 2026

1.0 Background

1.1 Professional Standard 7.6. in Schedule A: Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct in the AIBC Bylaws (the "Code of Ethics") requires that:

> *"Architects must have regard for the AIBC Schedules of Architectural Services with Fee Guidelines prior to entering into a Client-Architect Contract."*

1.2 As commentary for this Professional Standard notes, the intent of this requirement is to focus attention on the scope and quality of architectural services. The provision of inadequate services is contrary to the public interest. Guidance on fees is provided to assist the public in budgeting for architectural services.

1.3 Appropriate and adequate services are essential to protect the Client's interest; this fee guidance is provided to help guard against inadequate architectural services.

1.4 Since the last revision to hourly rates in this Practice Guideline in 2017, the Bank of Canada Consumer Price Index (CPI) has been just under 30%, across all sectors. The 2026 rates have been set considering changes to the CPI, as well as Registrant and Client group recommendations.

1.5 Hourly rates published herein are not mandatory.

1.6 Capitalized terms in this document are defined terms in the AIBC Bylaws and have the same meaning.

2.0 Fees for Architect-Principals

2.1 Time-based fees for Architect-principals (applicable to principal-level services) are established to be billable at these recommended hourly rates:

- $310.00: when performing the services of a principal, generally;
- $375.00: when performing architectural services requiring special expertise; and
- $500.00: when performing services such as those of an arbitrator or expert witness, for which the Architect is eminently qualified.

2.2 Architect-principal rates are expected to apply to services which require principal-level skills and judgment. Other services should, or could, be delegated to staff and charged accordingly, notwithstanding their occasionally being performed by principals. Architect-principals who themselves provide services at various principal and staff levels of skill and judgment may use correspondingly variable hourly rates for billing purposes, or use a single "blended" rate. Refer to AIBC Practice Guideline: Blended Hourly Rate Fees for Principals in Small Practices.

3.0 Fees for Staff

3.1 For staff, the recommended billable hourly rate is calculated by multiplying the person's nominal monthly salary (i.e. gross salary due, excluding benefits) by a factor of 2.3 percent. As an example, a staff member earning $10,000.00 per month (nominally) is billable at (0.023 x $10,000.00) = $230.00 per hour.

3.2 When providing services under fixed fees or percentage fees, rather than hourly rate fees, it is good practice to provide Clients with a 'schedule of hourly rates' for the various positions within the Firm, at the outset of a Project. By providing this information to Clients early, Architect and Client may avoid conflict in the event of unanticipated additional services being required midway through a Project.

Practice Guideline Amendment History

2026 September 3 – Updated rates and Bylaw references; removed note on fees for energy compliance and added note on 'schedule of hourly rates'.

2019 October – New graphic template. Renamed Practice Guideline, formerly Practice Note. References to Practice Note updated to Practice Guideline.

2017 January, reissued as Practice Note 17 – updated per the Bank of Canada Consumer Price Index; provides clarification fees for services related to energy efficiency related building code compliance.

2008 April, issued as Bulletin 51, update to the second edition.

2007 November, issued as Bulletin 51 – second edition.

2000 December, issued as Bulletin 51 – update to the first edition.

1996 January, issued as Bulletin 51 – first edition.

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