

Orders and Variances Registration Changes

Summary

The process and requirements for registering orders and variances issued under the *Safety Codes Act* are changing. Effective **December 1, 2026**:

- The Orders and Variances Portal (OVP) will be the sole acceptable method for registering orders and variances; and
- Updated requirements for the registration of orders and variances come into effect.

The requirements described in this bulletin apply to all accredited organizations and Safety Codes Officers (SCOs) responsible for issuing orders and variances throughout Alberta.

Background

The Safety Codes Council is responsible for overseeing accreditation, monitoring compliance, supporting quality assurance activities, and promoting consistency in the administration of Alberta's safety codes system. This oversight includes the mandatory reporting of variances and orders by SCOs.

Registering orders and variances with the Council has been required for many years. Changes are being made to modernize processes and improve system-wide oversight and analysis.

The OVP and updated processes will:

- Standardize reporting requirements across all accredited organizations.
- Improve the quality, consistency, and timeliness of information provided to the Council.
- Support compliance reviews, audits, and quality assurance activities.
- Improve trend analysis and identification of systemic issues.
- Support future code development and policy discussions.
- Enhance accountability, transparency, and confidence within Alberta's safety codes system.

Registration of an order or variance through OVP does not constitute Council approval of that order or variance and does not transfer responsibility for the decision from the individual authorized under the *Safety Codes Act* to issue it. OVP is an administrative reporting, compliance, and oversight tool that supports the Council's accreditation and regulatory responsibilities.

Required Action

All accredited organizations must ensure that orders and variances are reported to the Council through the Orders and Variances Portal (OVP).

All SCOs who issue orders and variances must use OVP to register those orders and variances.

Only SCOs will have access to register variances and orders in OVP. However, accredited organizations and SCOs remain jointly responsible for ensuring that registrations are complete and accurate.

Beginning December 1, 2026:

- OVP will be the sole acceptable method for registration of orders and variances. SCOs must use OVP to register all orders and variances. The legacy submission method (email) will no longer be in operation.
- Variances must be registered in OVP at the time of issuance or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter.
- Orders must be registered in OVP before delivery to the owner, permit holder, contractor, or responsible party.
- Supporting documentation (alternative solutions and/or documentation the SCO used to make the decision to issue or refuse the variance) must be included at the time of registration.
- Accredited organizations remain responsible for ensuring that orders and variances issued on their behalf are properly registered.
- All variances must be registered individually, for a specific location, including those relying on jurisdictional alternative solutions.

High-Volume Organizations and System Integration

The Council recognizes that some accredited organizations issue a significant volume of orders and variances and may utilize permitting systems, records-management systems, or other information-management platforms in the administration of their safety codes programs.

Organizations with high volumes may work with the Council to develop automated interfaces, integrations, or other approved solutions that facilitate the transfer of required information into OVP while maintaining compliance with Council reporting requirements.

Additional information about integration options and technical requirements will be provided as implementation progresses.

Multi-Stage Permits

Where a variance relates to a multi-stage permit process, registration may occur simultaneously with, or before, issuance of the final building permit, provided that:

- The variance decision has been made; and
- The documentation used to reach that decision is available at the time of registration.

Documentation Requirements

A variance is a decision that an alternative approach provides approximately equivalent or greater safety performance than the prescriptive requirements that would otherwise apply. Effective oversight of the variance process requires an understanding of the evidence the SCO used to make the decision.

When registering a variance through OVP, the SCO must submit any documentation necessary to demonstrate approximately equivalent or greater safety that the SCO used to make the variance decision. Not every document provided in the permit application must be submitted.

The Council previously communicated documentation expectations through [IB-2025-11-18 Mandatory Documentation of Variances](#). Those requirements remain in effect.

Revised Variance Form

The Council has introduced a revised [Variance Form for Proposed Alternative Solutions](#) to support consistent, complete, and defensible variance decisions.

The revised form brings the key components of the variance process together into a single document, providing a consistent approach from the initial request and supporting justification through to the SCO's review and final decision:

- The requirement proposed to be varied;
- The objectives, functional statements, and intent associated with that requirement;
- The proposed alternative solution and supporting evidence;
- Applicable professional involvement; and
- The SCO's decision to issue or refuse the variance.

The revised variance form must be completed and included when the variance is registered through OVP. The form does not replace the supporting documentation used by the SCO to assess whether the proposed alternative provides approximately equivalent or greater safety performance.

Privacy Requirements

OVP has been designed and will be administered in compliance with Alberta's *Protection of Privacy Act* (POPA). Information submitted through OVP must be limited to information necessary for the Council's accreditation, compliance, audit, quality assurance, regulatory oversight, and administrative functions.

Accredited organizations should ensure:

- Personal information is collected, used, and disclosed in accordance with applicable legislation.
- Unnecessary personal information is removed or redacted where appropriate.
- Documentation submitted through OVP contains only information reasonably required to support the variance decision.

Additional guidance respecting privacy obligations and OVP submission requirements will be provided before implementation.

QMP and QMS Language and Requirements

Many currently approved QMPs and QMSs state that only a copy of the variance must be registered and that supporting documentation is not required. This language reflected the requirements of the historical variance registry process.

Effective December 1, 2026, organizations should consider any existing language about variance registration requirements to be replaced by the prescribed OVP reporting process. Accredited organizations must comply with OVP requirements regardless of whether their QMP or QMS documents contain legacy registry language.

The Council's municipal, agency, corporate, and other applicable QMP/QMS templates will be updated before OVP implementation. Revised language will be incorporated through future renewal, review, and approval processes.

Non-Compliance

All accredited organizations and SCOs must comply with the orders and variances requirements as stated in this bulletin.

Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may result in enforcement actions by the Administrator responsible up to and including removal of accreditation or certification.

Resources and Support

To support implementation, the Council is providing a series of videos to help users get acquainted with the OVP:

- [Account Creation - Orders & Variances Portal](#)
- [Creating a Variance Request - Orders & Variances Portal](#)
- [Creating an Order Request - Orders & Variances Portal](#)

Registration instructions:

- To register, visit: <https://ovp.safetycodes.ab.ca/>
- When the login box prompt appears, new users should click on "No account? Create one" to register.
- Users must sign up with their SCO email as registered in Council Connect.

Additional support resources will be made available in advance of the December 1, 2026 implementation date, including:

- Frequently asked questions.
- Training opportunities for accredited organizations and SCOs.

Contact

Questions regarding OVP implementation may be directed to accreditation@safetycodes.ab.ca.

Questions regarding an SCO's responsibilities may be directed to certification@safetycodes.ab.ca.