



PRESS RELEASE



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Housing Starts Down 8.7 Per Cent in January

OTTAWA, Ontario, February 10, 2003 — The seasonally adjusted annual rate¹ of housing starts in Canada in January was 183,200, which is 8.7 per cent lower than December 2002's revised² rate of 200,700 units.

"This year is off to a solid beginning, since in the past ten years only 2002 had more starts in January," said David Weingarden, Senior Economist at Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Market Analysis Centre. "Low mortgage rates, along with growing employment and increasing incomes continue to support the housing market."

The seasonally adjusted annual rate of urban single starts decreased 7.6 per cent to 97,800 units in January from 105,800 units in December while urban multiple starts decreased 8.0 per cent to an annual rate of 63,700 units in January from 69,200 in December. Rural starts in January were estimated at an annual rate of 21,700 units.

Estimated actual urban housing starts for January 2003 are 17.2 per cent lower than for January 2002 (9,683 units compared with 11,689 units). The single-detached market increased 6.0 per cent while multiples decreased 34.2 per cent.

¹ All starts figures in this release, other than actual starts, are seasonally adjusted annual rates (SAAR) that are monthly figures adjusted to remove normal seasonal variation and multiplied by 12 to reflect annual levels.

² Figures for the most recent month are preliminary and subject to revisions due to corrections or updates from quarterly enumeration or sampling results.

Special note:

Prior to July 2002, the CMHC Starts and Completions Survey consisted of a monthly enumeration of new housing activity in urban centres with a population of 10,000 persons and over. As of July 2002, the survey will be conducted monthly in urban centres with a population of 50,000 persons and over and quarterly in urban centres with a population of 10,000 to 49,999 persons. Statistical models will be used to estimate provincial and national housing starts in urban centres with a population of 10,000 persons and over, on a monthly basis.

The methodology is unchanged for estimating housing starts in rural areas (areas other than urban centres with a population of 10,000 persons and over.) In these areas, a sample survey is used on a quarterly basis. As was the case in the past, statistical models continue to be used to estimate national housing starts in all areas on a monthly basis.

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Housing Starts, Actual and SAAR*				
	December 2002		January 2003	
	Final		Preliminary	
	Actual	SAAR	Actual	SAAR
Canada, all areas	15,115	200,700	10,430	183,200
Canada, rural areas	2,027	25,700	747	21,700
Canada, urban centres**	13,088	175,000	9,683	161,500
Canada, singles, urban centres	7,554	105,800	5,247	97,800
Canada, multiples, urban centres	5,534	69,200	4,436	63,700
Atlantic region, urban centres	717	10,400	325	6,300
Quebec, urban centres	2,709	34,400	2,180	38,100
Ontario, urban centres	5,301	70,100	3,808	64,900
Prairie region, urban centres	2,844	37,600	2,148	33,600
British Columbia, urban centres	1,517	22,500	1,222	18,600

Source: CMHC



*Seasonally adjusted annual rates

** Urban centres with a population of 10,000 persons and over.

Detailed data available upon request.