

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, POABC

File No: 06-0114

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date:	June 19, 2012
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2006
Subject:	Clearance of handrail from other surfaces
Keywords:	Handrail, clearance
Building Code Reference(s):	3.4.6.4.(3) & 3.4.6.4.(8); 9.8.7.5.(1) & 9.8.7.5.(2), 9.8.7.5.(5)

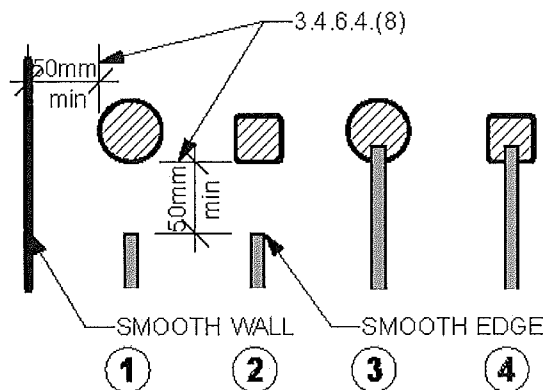
Question:

Is the BC Building Code Sentence 3.4.6.4.(8) intended to regulate both the gap between the handrail and the adjacent wall as well as the gap below a handrail to the top of the edge of guard panels below?

Interpretation:

Yes

Sentence 3.4.6.4.(8) requires that the clearance between a handrail and any surface behind it shall be not less than 50 mm or 60 mm if surface is rough or abrasive. Table 3.9.1.1. provides a listing of the Objective and Functional Statements as OS3.1/F30 (to minimize the risk of injury to persons as a result of tripping, slipping, falling, contact, drowning or collision) and OS3.7/F10 (to facilitate a timely movement of persons to a safe place in an emergency). These functional statements clarify the reason for establishing a minimum gap so the person's fingers are not injured (F30) or trapped (F10) while using the handrail. The prescribed gap assures that sliding a hand along the handrail will not be injured or trapped (refer to diagrams 1 & 2). On the other hand, if the guard panel below is directly attached to the bottom of a handrail, the risk of trapping or injury is eliminated (refer to diagrams 3 & 4).




R. J. Light, Committee Chair

The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee with members representing AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, and POABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. The purpose of the committee is to encourage uniform province wide interpretation of the BC Building Code. These views should not be considered as the official interpretation of legislated requirements based on the BC Building Code, as final responsibility for an interpretation rests with the local *Authority Having Jurisdiction*. The views of the joint committee should not be construed as legal advice.