


# BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

**File No: 12-0060**

**INTERPRETATION**

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Interpretation Date:	September 15, 2015
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2012
Subject:	Maximum unsupported height of wood studs
Keywords:	Maximum unsupported height, wood studs
Building Code Reference(s):	Table 9.23.10.1.
<b>Question:</b>	<p>A previous Interpretation 98-0120, based on the 1998 BC Building Code, clarified that the "Maximum Unsupported Height" in the former Table 9.23.10.A. means the vertical height of a stud between lateral members that brace the strong axis of the stud. The intent of this interpretation was to clarify the unsupported height related to overall height of the stud between lateral supports, rather than the height of a portion of stud between horizontal blocking within the stud space.</p> <p>Please clarify if the "Maximum Unsupported Height" is intended to be the height of the vertical stud itself, or if it is intended to be the height of the entire stud wall which includes the stud plus the top and bottom plates.</p>
<b>Interpretation:</b>	<p>Table 9.23.10.1. has been in the building code since the 1977 edition of the National Building Code of Canada. This Table originated based on experience, rather than any engineering calculations.</p> <p>Therefore a designer should be conservative in their design approach when applying this Table.</p> <p>Conventional wood framing of a wood stud wall includes a double top plate and a single bottom plate. The upper face of the double plate is laterally braced by the underside of the roof or floor joists. The bottom face of the bottom plate is laterally braced by the floor sheathing.</p> <p>With such conventional framing, the top and bottom plates are adequate to transfer the lateral forces from the lateral framing members to the top and bottom of the wood stud itself. Therefore, using conventional framing, the "Maximum Unsupported Length" would be the actual length of the wood stud itself rather than the overall height of the wood stud wall which includes the top and bottom plates.</p> <p> _____ R. J. Light, Committee Chair</p>
<p>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 <i>Authority Having Jurisdiction</i>. The views of the joint committee should not be construed as legal advice.</p>	
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