

# BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

**File No: 06-0065**

**INTERPRETATION**

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Interpretation Date:	February 15, 2011
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2006
Subject:	Building, Exterior Wall and Building Area
Keywords:	Building and Building Area
Building Code Reference(s):	Subsection 3.2.2., 1.4.1.2., 3.2.2.5., 1.3.3.3., BCIC #98-0111, BCAB #1649 July 23, 2008

## Question:

How is building area determined for structures that do not have exterior walls?

Examples of structures that are partially or wholly "open" to the exterior include:

- A covered storage structure consisting of a roof supported by columns with no exterior walls.

A residential building with exterior decks that may be cantilevered out from the building or have additional supporting structure independent of the building. Further, these decks could be covered with a roof structure.

## Interpretation:

As defined in Article 1.4.1.2., building area means:

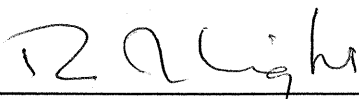
"the greatest horizontal area of a building above grade within the outside surfaces of exterior walls or within the outside surfaces of exterior walls and the centerline of firewalls."

Based on this definition, the above-noted storage structure example does not have exterior walls. However, the NBC 1995 Users' Guide, Fire Protection, Occupancy and Safety recommends that the use and occupancy of the covered space be considered in order to determine if the space should be considered part of the building or outside the building. For example, it would be appropriate to use the foot print of the building to measure the building area of a covered, open-air parking structure.

Refer to BC Interpretation 98-0111 for examples of measuring building area for balconies and exterior roof structures.

BCAB #1649 July 23, 2008 ruled that the requirements of Subsection 9.10.14., Spatial Separation Between Buildings" are applicable to the canopy providing weather protection over the re-fuelling pumps at a vehicle service station.

Generally, it is appropriate to exercise common sense and good judgment in establishing building area.



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.