

# BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing  
**AIBC, EGBC, BOABC**

**File No: 12-0124**

**INTERPRETATION**

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Interpretation Date:	November 20, 2018
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2012
Subject:	Occupant load for dining, beverage and cafeteria space
Keywords:	Occupant load; dining, beverage and cafeteria space; outdoor seating; means of egress; washrooms
Building Code Reference(s):	3.1.17.1, 3.7.2.2

### Question:

A dining establishment has an indoor dining area of 200m<sup>2</sup> and an adjoining outdoor dining area of 50m<sup>2</sup>.

1. How is the occupant load calculated?
2. How is means of egress considered?
3. How are washroom provisions considered?

### Interpretation:

1. In this example the appropriate occupant load factor for both indoor and outdoor dining areas is 1.2m<sup>2</sup>/person. This results in potential respective occupant loads of 167 persons for the indoor dining area, and 42 persons for the outdoor dining area. The combined total of both indoor and outdoor dining would be 167+42=209 persons.

Sentence 3.1.17.1.(3) requires balconies to be regarded as part of the floor area, therefore similar adjoining contained exterior spaces are considered an extension of the interior floor area, for the purposes of occupant load calculations.

Such exterior areas are quite often covered or enclosed by awnings, canopies, or tent-like enclosures to facilitate extended use.

If it can be demonstrated that fewer persons will actually occupy both interior and exterior spaces simultaneously, then this would be consistent with Clause 3.1.17.1.(1)(c).

Exterior space seating is typically seasonal and the occupants are often either seated indoors or outdoors depending on the weather; discussion and agreement with the Authority having Jurisdiction may be warranted.

2. Depending on the arrangement of the dining premises, the means of egress must consider the combined total occupant load of both indoor and outdoor (209 persons) if the outdoor area has its means of egress via the indoor dining area, and vice versa.



Patrick Shek, P.Eng., CP, FEC, Committee Chair

The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee with members representing AIBC, EGBC and BOABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. The Building and Safety Standards Branch, Province of BC and the City of Vancouver participate in the committee's proceedings with respect to interpretations of the BC Building Code. 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.

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However, if each area is independently served by its own means of egress, then the respective occupant load of each area could be considered separately for the purposes of means of egress.

3. If the washroom facilities are only provided via the indoor dining area and if it is expected that both indoor and outdoor areas are fully occupied simultaneously, the combined total occupant load of both indoor and outdoor areas should be used for calculating washroom counts. Otherwise the anticipated occupant load should be used if the outdoor seating areas are only seasonally occupied.

Refer to the discussion in item 1. on the occupant load calculations.

See also past Building Code Interpretation 12-0045.



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