

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 12-0138

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date: December 9, 2018

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 2012

Subject: Sound separation requirements between dwelling units and exterior exit passageways

Keywords: Dwelling units, sound separation, exterior exit passageways

Building Code Reference(s): 3.3.4.6.(1); 5.9.1.

Question:

Sentence 3.3.4.6.(1) requires that " Sound transmission class ratings of building assemblies shall conform to Section 5.9." Sentence 5.9.1.2.(1) requires that "...a dwelling unit shall be separated from every other space in a building in which noise may be generated by..." sound separation assemblies having performance requirements to mitigate noise transmission through such assemblies.

Does this sound separation requirement also apply at the doors and windows between dwelling units and exterior exit passageways?

Interpretation:

No.

The requirements of Subsection 5.9 are intended to apply between dwelling units and other spaces in the building, but not between the dwelling units and the exterior exit passageway. Division A, Article 1.4.1.2., indicates: "Building means any structure used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy." Exterior exit passageways are considered as exterior circulation space used only for access and means of egress, as distinct from supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy.

The Appendix A note A-5.9 also clarifies that "Sentence 5.9.1.2.(1) applies to the separation of dwelling units from other dwelling units with regard to sound transmission irrespective of Clause 5.1.2.1(1)(b), which deals with the separation of dissimilar environments. It is understood that, at any time, there is the potential for sound levels to be quite different in adjoining dwelling units." The referenced Clause 5.1.2.1.(1)(b) confirms that Part 5 applies to: "building materials, components and assemblies separating environmentally dissimilar interior spaces..."

Therefore, it is interpreted that the requirements of Subsection 5.9 apply between dwellings, or between dwelling units and other building components such as public corridors, elevators, or refuse chutes; but not between the dwelling units and an exterior exit passageway.



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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It should be noted that there are new requirements for sound separation barriers in the BC Building Code 2018. For example Sentence 5.8.1.1.(1) now includes additional requirements for addressing flanking sound transmission mitigation, such as "apparent sound transmission class" (ASTC) rating requirements.



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