

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0068

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date:	July 21, 2020
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2018
Subject:	Applicable Requirements for Fabric-Covered Structures
Keywords:	Fabric-Covered Structures, Tents
Building Code Reference(s):	3.1.6, A-3.1.6, 3.2.2.2.(1)

Question:

Are the requirements of Subsection 3.1.6 for tents also applicable to fabric-covered structures such as yurts?

Interpretation:

No (except in certain situations).

Subsection 3.1.6 applies to tents and air-supported structures.

The Building Code Notes in A-3.1.6 state:

“The requirements in this Subsection are intended to be limited to certain types of structure. For instance, the word “tent” as used in the Code is intended to refer to a temporary shelter which is used at an open-air event such as a fair or an exhibition. A tent will normally be constructed of a fabric held up by poles and attached to the ground by ties. The requirements for tents, however, are not intended to be applied to fabric structures located on buildings.”

A fabric-covered structure is assumed to be a long-lasting building, not a temporary installation such as a tent as described in the Note excerpted above. On this basis, it would be subject to the Code requirements for permanent buildings, as for any other type of building.

However, there can be many different types of fabric-covered structures or tent-like structures.

Structures such as yurts for residential use, including short-term rental accommodation, would be subject to the same requirements as any other permanent building.



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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Fabric coverings that are provided only for weather protection such as for road salt or sand storage in municipal or highway maintenance yards, or for industrial equipment that would otherwise be exposed to the exterior environment, would in most cases not be considered as buildings.

There are certain types of fabric-covered structures where it is appropriate to apply the provisions of Subsection 3.1.6., particularly when the structure poses minimal fire risk:

- Storage warehouses with minimal combustible content,
- Weather protection covering in lumber yards for lumber storage, provided the storage complies with the requirements of the BC Fire Code Section 3.3 – Outdoor Storage.
- Farmer's Market tents
- Golf cart storage tents

There may be unusual or unique aspects of fabric-covered structures where it is appropriate to evaluate the building on the basis of alternative solutions as permitted by Article 1.2.1.1. of Division A, or as a special or unusual structure as described in Sentence 3.2.2.2.(1).

The application of Subsection 3.1.6. to other types of structures should be discussed with the AHJ.



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