

# BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

**File No: 18-0074**

**INTERPRETATION**

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Interpretation Date:	January 19, 2021
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2018
Subject:	L-Shaped Grab Bars in Accessible Showers
Keywords:	Grab Bars, Accessible Showers
Building Code Reference(s):	3.8.2.8.(10), 3.8.3.16.(1), CSA B651

## Question:

Can the L-shaped grab bar required in an accessible shower be provided by separate vertical and horizontal grab bars?

## Interpretation:

The answer to this question depends on the approach to compliance with accessibility requirements, as described below.

BCBC Sentence 3.8.2.8.(10) requires that, except within a suite of residential occupancy, where showers are provided in a building, at least one shower stall in each group of showers shall comply with Subsection 3.8.3. Clause 3.8.3.16.(1)(f) requires these accessible showers to have 2 grab bars. One of these bars is required to be vertical and located near the entrance to the shower, on the side wall where the seat is located. The other grab bar is required to be L-shaped and located on the wall opposite the shower entrance, with the vertical member near the side wall where the seat is located. (Refer to Clause 3.8.3.16.(1)(f) for dimensions.)

Clause 3.8.3.16.(1)(f) refers only to 2 grab bars, one vertical and one L-shaped, so using 2 bars to simulate the L-shaped bar would not comply with this requirement. However, these grab bar requirements are significantly different from requirements in previous BCBC editions. There are reports that L-shaped grab bars of the dimensions required for accessible showers, which are different from the L-shaped grab bars required at water closets, are not readily available. Subject to agreement with the authority having jurisdiction, it may be acceptable to install separate horizontal and vertical grab bars that meet the dimensional requirements for the L-shaped grab bar.



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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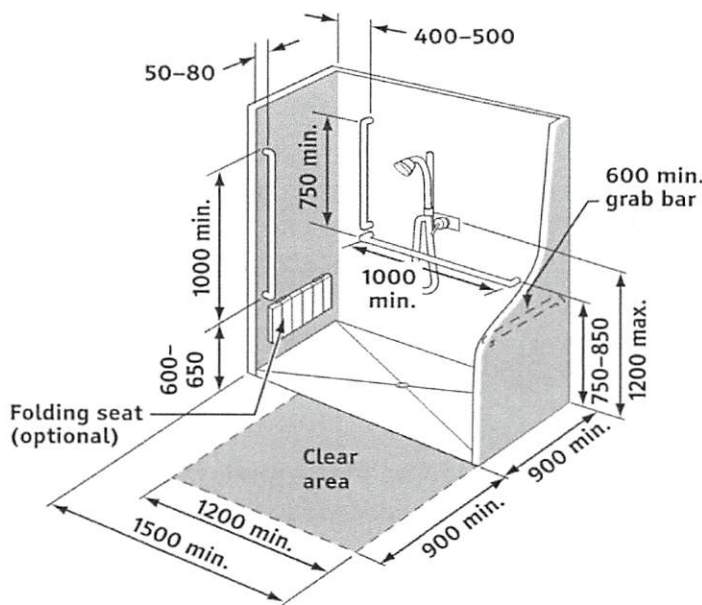
INTERPRETATION

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Alternatively, Table 3.8.3.1 allows bathing facilities, including showers and bathtubs, to comply with Section 6.5 of CSA B651 "Accessible Design for the Built Environment" instead of complying with BCBC Articles 3.8.3.16 (for showers) and 3.8.3.17 (for bathtubs). As required by provision 6.5.5.3 of CSA B651, the L-shaped grab bar is actually replaced by separate vertical and horizontal grab bars.

However, in addition to these two grab bars and the vertical grab bar at the entrance beside the seat, B651 also requires another horizontal grab bar on the opposite side of the shower stall from the seat, so B651 requires a total of 4 grab bars for accessible showers. If this option is chosen, compliance with all of B651 Section 6.5 is required, and the BCBC shower and bathtub requirements in Articles 3.8.3.16 and 3.8.3.17 will no longer be applicable.

The insert below indicates an acceptable roll-in shower stall in accordance with CSA B651 – 2012.



**Figure 49**  
**Roll-in shower stall**  
(See Clauses 6.5.5.2 and 6.5.5.3.)

*Patrick Shek*

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