

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0076

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date: February 16, 2021

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 2018

Subject: Openings near unenclosed exterior exit

Keywords: Unprotected openings, unenclosed exterior exit, wired glass, glass block, fire compartment

Building Code Reference(s): 9.9.4.4.(1)

Question:

Sentence 9.9.4.4.(1) requires unprotected openings in exterior walls to be protected with wired glass or glass block if an unenclosed exterior exit stair or ramp provides the only means of egress from a suite and is exposed to fire from unprotected openings in the exterior walls of another fire compartment or another dwelling unit, ancillary space or common space in a house with a secondary suite.

Does the protection of unprotected openings only apply to those exterior walls that are exposing building faces?

Interpretation:

No.

Sentence 9.9.4.4.(1) requires unprotected openings in exterior walls to be protected with wired glass or glass block if an unenclosed exterior exit stair or ramp provides the only means of egress from a suite and is exposed to fire from unprotected openings in the exterior walls of a another fire compartment or another dwelling unit, ancillary space or common space in a house with a secondary suite.

The term “unprotected openings” in Sentence 9.9.4.4.(1) is italicized so it is a defined term. According to Division A, Part 1, Article 1.4.1.2. “unprotected opening (as applying to exposing building face) means a doorway, window or opening other than one equipped with a closure having the required fire protection rating or any part of a wall forming part of the exposing building face that has a fire-resistance rating less than that required for the exposing building face.



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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There are two parts to the definition of unprotected opening. The first part is a doorway, window or opening that does not have the required fire protection rating. The second part is a wall forming part of the exposing building face that has a fire-resistance rating less than that required for the exposing building face.

Throughout the code, the location of unprotected openings is specified such as in exterior walls of fire compartments or in exposing building faces. Clauses 9.9.4.4.(1)(a) and (b) specify the locations of those unprotected openings and clearly they are not limited to those openings in the exposing building faces.

Sentence 9.9.4.4.(1) only requires the unprotected openings in exterior walls to be protected with wired glass or glass block so the meaning of unprotected openings should be in accordance with the first part of the definition, i.e. doorway, window or opening of any exterior walls, not just those openings in the exposing building faces.



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

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