

# BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

**File No: 18-0085**

**INTERPRETATION**

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<b>Interpretation Date:</b>	November 17, 2020
<b>Building Code Edition:</b>	BC Building Code 2018
<b>Subject:</b>	Exterior Foam Plastic Insulation
<b>Keywords:</b>	Foamed plastic insulation, rain screen air gap
<b>Building Code Reference(s):</b>	9.25.5.2., 9.25.2.3.(3), A-9.25.2.3.(3)
<b>Question:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Is foamed plastic insulation permitted to be installed outboard of an air space that is vented to the outdoors as per 9.25.5.2.(1)(c)?</li><li>2. If the foamed plastic is located as described in Question 1, can it be considered as thermal insulation for the building?</li><li>3. If the foamed plastic is located as described in Question 1, can it be considered when determining the ratio requirements of 9.25.5.2.(1)(b)?</li></ol>
<b>Interpretation:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Yes Clause 9.25.5.2.(1)(c) permits sheet and panel type materials described in 9.25.5.1. to be installed outboard of an air space that is vented to the outside. Foam plastic insulation is considered as a sheet and panel type material per 9.25.5.2.</li><li>2. No As stated in 9.25.2.3.(3) and A-9.25.2.3.(3), thermal insulation must have at least one full face to be in full and continuous contact with an element of low air permeance. As stated in the Notes to Part 9 - A-9.25.2.3.(3), for thermal insulation to be effective, it must not be short-circuited by convective air flow through and around the material. The rain screen air gap provides this short circuit which prevent the foam plastic to perform as thermal insulation.</li><li>3. No As stated in Answer #2 above, since the foamed plastic cannot be considered as thermal insulation, it does not have any affect of the ratio of outboard to inboard insulation described in 9.25.5.2.(1)(b).</li></ol> <p> Patrick Shek, P.Eng., CP, FEC, Committee Chair</p>
<p>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 <i>Authority Having Jurisdiction</i>. The views of the joint committee should not be construed as legal advice.</p>	