

# BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

**File No: 12-0051**

**INTERPRETATION**

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Interpretation Date:	May 19, 2015 ( <i>revised December 9, 2018</i> )
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2012
Subject:	Fire separation requirements for various types of vestibules
Keywords:	Fire separation, vestibules
Building Code Reference(s):	<b><u>3.2.6.2.(4), Appendix B-3.2.6.2.(4)</u></b> , (3.2.6.3.(1), Appendix B-3.2.6.3.(1), 3.2.8.5.(1)(b), 3.3.5.4.(1), 3.3.5.7., 3.4.4.4.(7),(8)

## Question:

The building code requires the installation of vestibules for a number of different reasons, but it is often not clear as to the required fire-resistance rating (FRR) for the perimeter walls of these vestibules. Please clarify the required fire-resistance ratings for fire separation walls for the various types of vestibules.

## Interpretation:

Except as noted below, when the building code requires a vestibule, the vestibule walls should be constructed as fire separations with no fire-resistance rating. All doors that open onto the vestibule must have self-closing devices and positive latching.

### For all building types:

The wall between a vestibule and an exit stair requires **the** same FRR as required for the exit stair per Article 3.4.4.1.

The wall between a vestibule and an elevator hoistway requires that same FRR as required for the elevator hoistway per Article 3.5.3.1.

The wall between a vestibule and a room that requires a fire separation (e.g. a service room that contains fuel-fired equipment) must have the same FRR that is required for the room.



**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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## For High Buildings per Subsection 3.2.6.

When vestibules are required between the following components, vestibule perimeter walls must be constructed as fire separations with the following fire-resistance ratings:

When an elevator hoistway penetrates a floor above the lowest exit storey (e.g. Level 2 floor slab when Level 1 is the exit storey) as well as the floor of the storey immediately below the lowest exit storey (e.g. **Level 1 floor slab** when Level 1 is the exit storey), elevator lobbies that are located below the lowest exit storey will be separated as follows:

To a public corridor	45 min FRR	App B-3.2.6.2,(4)
To any stair or elevator shaft	2 hour FRR	App B-3.2.6.2,(4)
To any floor area other than public corridor	2 hour FRR	App B-3.2.6.2,(4)

High building connected to another building 2 hour FRR 3.2.6.3.(1), App B-3.2.6.3.(1)

**The wording of Sentence 3.2.6.2.(4) clearly states that “measures shall be taken to limit movement of smoke from a fire in a “floor area” below the lowest exit storey (i.e. Level P1) into upper storeys (i.e. Level 1)”.**

**Appendix B-3.2.6.2.(4) refers to an elevator hoistway that penetrates the “floor of the storey immediately below the exit storey”.**

**Note that the definition of “storey” means that portion of the building that is situated between the top of any floor and the top of any floor next above it.**

**This means that the Level 1 floor slab is the floor of the storey immediately below the lowest exit storey when Level 1 is the lowest exit storey as describe is Appendix B-3.2.6.2.(4).**

**Refer to the sketches on Page 3 for further clarification.**

**Elevator 1 does not require a fire rated CO vestibule because it does not penetrate the Level 1 floor slab (the floor of the storey below the exit level).**

**Elevator 2 does not require a fire rated CO vestibule because it does not penetrate the Level 2 floor slab (the floor of the storey above the exit level).**

**Elevators 3 & 4 require fire rated CO vestibules because they penetrate both the Level 1 and Level 2 floor slabs (the floors of the storeys below and above the exit level).**



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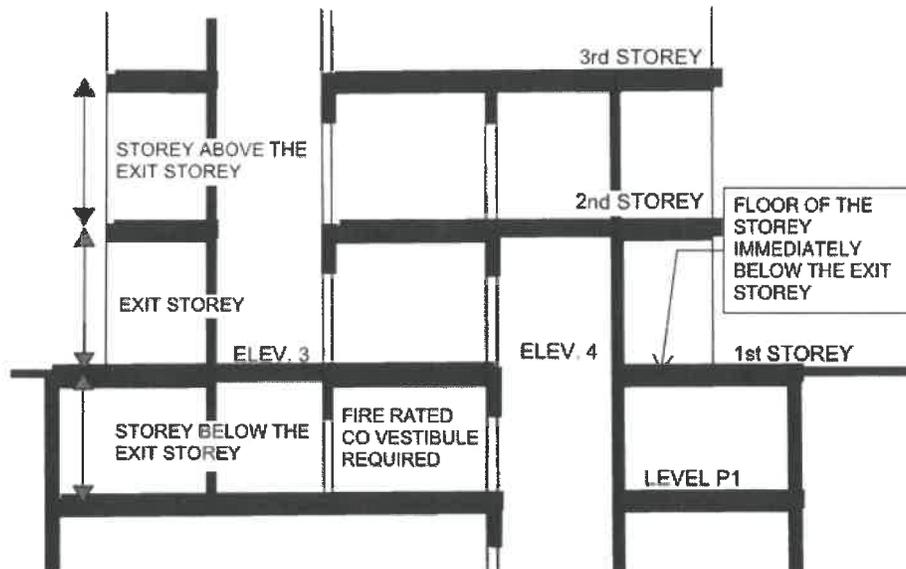
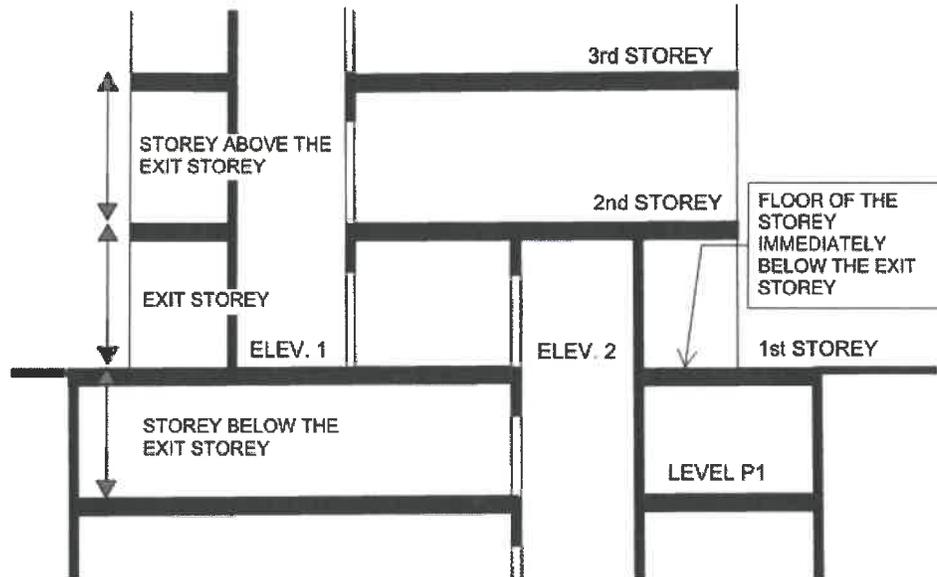
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