

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0116

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date:	June 15, 2021
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2018
Subject:	Mechanical Ventilation in a Dwelling Unit Undergoing Renovations
Keywords:	Ventilation, Renovation
Building Code Reference(s):	9.32.3, Division A 1.1.1.2.(1)

Questions:

1. Do the requirements for heating season mechanical ventilation apply to the creation of a new bedroom within an existing single family dwelling unit that was constructed prior to the BCBC requirements for mechanical ventilation?
2. Do the requirements for heating season mechanical ventilation apply to the creation of, or legalization of, a secondary suite in a single family dwelling unit that was constructed prior to the BCBC requirements for mechanical ventilation?

Interpretation:

1. Yes.

Division B Part 9 of the BCBC does not provide any guidance for upgrading of existing dwelling units that are renovated. However, Division A Sentence 1.1.1.2.(1) states:

“Where a building is altered, rehabilitated, renovated or repaired, or there is a change in occupancy, the level of life safety and building performance shall not be decreased below a level that already exists.”

The creation of a new bedroom can be assumed to increase the number of people sleeping in the dwelling unit. This would be a reduction in building performance because more people would be exposed to the existing non-conforming conditions.

It may be impossible or impractical for an existing building to comply with all of the heating season ventilation requirements of the current BCBC.



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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The Notes to Division A Sentence 1.1.1.2.(1) of the BCBC state:

“The successful application of Code requirements to existing construction becomes a matter of balancing the cost of implementing a requirement with the relative importance of that requirement to the overall Code objectives. The degree to which any particular requirement can be relaxed without affecting the intended level of safety of the Code requires considerable judgment on the part of both the designer and the authority having jurisdiction.”

The authority having jurisdiction should be consulted with respect to determining an acceptable level of upgrading.

2. Yes.

The rationale noted above for a new bedroom also applies to a new or newly legalized secondary suite.



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