

# BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

**File No: 12-0102**

**INTERPRETATION**

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Interpretation Date:	September 19, 2017
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2012
Subject:	Grade
Keywords:	Grade, lowest of the average levels
Building Code Reference(s):	Div. A – 1.4.1.2. – def'n of grade and first storey

**Question:**

Is grade established as the average exterior grade on all 4 sides of a building?

**Interpretation:**

No

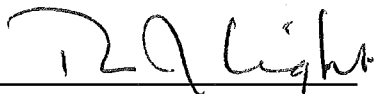
Grade is defined in the BC Building Code as follows:

**Grade** means the **lowest** of the average levels of finished ground adjoining each exterior wall of a *building*, except that localized depressions need not be considered in the determination of average levels of finished ground.

When calculating grade for a simple rectangular building, you take the average level of finished ground adjacent at each of the 4 sides of the building. Then you take the "lowest" of these 4 levels to be "grade".

In other words, grade is the average level of finished ground adjoining the exterior wall on the "lowest" side of the building.

It should be noted that local governments may have different methods of calculating grade and building height based on their local zoning bylaws for the purposes of development permits.



R. J. Light, 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.