


BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0159

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date:	February 15, 2022
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2018
Subject:	Available Electrical Service
Keywords:	Electrical Service, Electrical Facilities, Available, Alternate Electrical Sources, Seasonal, Intermittently Occupied.
Building Code Reference(s):	Notes A-9.1.1.1.(1), 9.34.1.1.(1), 9.34.1.2.(1)
Question:	<p>A property is located in a remote mountainside subdivision, substantially undeveloped, currently with no electrical service provided to the subject lot having a dwelling unit. The nearest BC Hydro pole is 152m away. Since the dwelling is planned to be a seasonal vacation cabin, a small photovoltaic electrical system is proposed as electrical service.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) What is considered "available" electrical service?2) Is the proposal for a small photovoltaic system considered acceptable for servicing electrical facilities required by Section 9.34?3) What is considered adequate for servicing required the electrical facilities?
Interpretation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Sentence 9.34.1.2.(1) states that where electrical services are available, electrical facilities shall be provided for every building in conformance with Section 9.34. When considering availability of electrical service, it must be determined if such service is reasonably available. For example, if the electrical service is not immediately available from an electric utility/power supply authority, but could be provided in the foreseeable future, electrical wiring and facilities should comply with Section 9.34., to be readily compliant when the electrical service becomes available. Similarly, the possibility of alternate electrical sources being used currently or in the foreseeable future, should also be considered. This could include photovoltaic, solar, wind, generator, or other such systems. <p>The Canadian Electrical Code does not specifically mandate that the electrical power supply must be provided only from a power utility. Section 64 of the CE Code recognizes stand-</p> <p></p> <hr/> <p>Patrick Shek, P.Eng., CP, FEC, Committee Chair</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 *Authority Having Jurisdiction*. The views of the joint committee should not be construed as legal advice.

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alone and interconnected with utilities renewable energy systems, energy production systems, and energy storage systems.

Appendix B Note on Rule 64-102 offers the following explanation:

“Rule 64-102 a)

A stand-alone residential or commercial renewable energy installation may have an ac output and be connected to a building electrical system in compliance with all the Rules of this Code. Even though such an installation may have service entrance equipment rated at 100 or 200 A at 120/240 V, there is no requirement that the renewable energy source provide either the rated full current or the dual voltages of the service equipment. While safety requirements mandate full compliance with this Code, a renewable energy installation is usually designed so that the actual ac demands on the system are sized to the output rating of the renewable energy system”

See also past BC Building Code Appeal #1116 and #1560.

- 2) No, with exceptions.

See previous discussion. The Building Code does not preclude use of alternate sources of electricity, subject to the requirements of Sentence 9.34.1.1.(1) for installations to comply with applicable installation standards and regulations.

See also past BC Building Code Appeal #1353.

- 3) The Notes to Sentence 9.1.1.1.(1) discuss Application of Part 9 to seasonally or intermittently occupied buildings, noting that various Part 9 requirements recognize leniency may be appropriate in some circumstances provided basic health and safety provisions are not compromised. Electrical facilities set out in Subsection 9.34. are only required where electrical services are available to the dwelling unit. If there is no available electrical service, there is no obligation to provide electrical facilities. However, when an alternate source of electrical service is used to meet the threshold of availability, it must be properly sized, and in accordance with the applicable regulatory standards addressing health and safety.



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

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