


# BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

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

**File No: 12-0118**

**INTERPRETATION**

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| Interpretation Date:   | May 15, 2018  |
| Building Code Edition:   | BC Building Code 2012   |
| Subject:   | Spacing between pickets in guards   |
| Keywords:  | Guards, spacing, pickets  |
| Building Code Reference(s):  | 3.3.1.18.(2)., 4.1.5.14.(2)   |
| <b>Question:</b>   | <p>If the vertical pickets in a <i>guard</i> are spaced with a clear opening between pickets of 100 mm, and the pickets have been designed to meet the structural loads per Sentence 4.1.5.14.(2), does this guard meet the intent of Sentence 3.3.1.18.(2), even if a sphere that is more than 100 mm in diameter can be forcibly pushed through the 100 mm gap between pickets?</p>   |
| <b>Interpretation:</b>   | <p>Yes (based on the 2012 BCBC)</p> <p>A guard with pickets that have a clear opening width of 100 mm as required by Sentence 3.3.1.18.(2) and meet the structural requirements of Sentence 4.1.5.14.(2), is considered to meet the intent of Sentence 3.3.1.18.(2).</p> <p>It should be noted that the 2015 National Building Code of Canada has added a new Sentence 4.1.5.14.(4) that would alter this interpretation:</p> <p>"4) The size of the opening between any two adjacent vertical elements within a guard shall not exceed the limits required by Part 3 when each of these elements is subjected to a specified <i>live load</i> of 0.1kN applied in opposite directions in the in-plane direction of the guard so as to produce the most critical effect"</p> <p>If this provision is adopted in the 2018 BC Building Code, designers would have to reduce the 100 mm clear width between pickets to accommodate the structural deflection of 2 adjacent pickets when subjected to a load of 0.1 kN applied in opposite directions to each picket.</p> <p><br/>R. J. Light, 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> |   |