

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0172

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date:	March 15, 2022
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2018
Subject:	Fire Separation between Secondary Suite and Garage
Keywords:	Secondary suite, attached garage
Building Code Reference(s):	9.10.9.16.(2), 9.10.9.16.(3)

Question:

A secondary suite in a single family dwelling abuts an attached garage (either on the same floor or overtop of the attached garage) that is shared with the main dwelling. Is a fire separation required between the secondary suite and the attached garage? If so, what is the required fire-resistance rating?

Interpretation:

Yes, a fire separation is required.

Article 9.10.9.16 regulates the requirements of fire separation between a storage garage (in this case the attached garage) and other occupancies (with or without a secondary suite).

A 1.5 h fire separation is required if the attached garage contains more than 5 motor vehicles as per Sentence 9.10.9.16.(1). The exceptions provided in Sentences 9.10.9.16.(2) and (3) are only applicable to those attached garages containing 5 or fewer motor vehicles.

A 1 h fire separation is required if the attached garage contains 5 motor vehicles or fewer as per Sentence 9.10.9.16.(2).

In the majority of cases the attached garage in a house with a secondary suite either serves only the principal dwelling or shares between the two; therefore, Sentence 9.10.9.16.(3) cannot be applied to waive the fire separation between the garage and the secondary suite. A 1 h fire separation would be required between the garage and the secondary suite.

In a very rare occasion if the attached garage only serves the secondary suite and is not abutting the principal dwelling Sentence 9.10.9.16.(3) can be applied to waive the fire separation between the garage and the secondary suite since the garage is considered part of the secondary suite.



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

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