

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0163

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date:	November 22, 2022
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2018
Subject:	Fireblocking horizontal concealed spaces
Keywords:	Concealed Space
Building Code Reference(s):	Article 3.1.11.5.

Question:

Is the service space beneath the fire rated assembly and above the ceiling of a public corridor a “horizontal concealed space within a floor or roof assembly of combustible construction” as described in Article 3.1.11.5.?

Interpretation:

No

The BCBC does not have a definition for “concealed spaces” but uses this term for spaces such as: attic, crawl space, cornice, raised floor, service space, plenum, cavity of wall or ceiling.

Concealed spaces may be a concern for the spread of fire within the building, whether they have combustible content or not. However, a concealed space that does not contain combustible materials, is considered less hazardous and NFPA does not require this space (with some size restrictions) to be sprinklered, as it does not contribute to propagation of the fire. Concealed spaces that contain combustible materials may require fire blocking in accordance with BCBC requirements.

A dropped ceiling that is below the fire rated assembly is not considered to be a concealed space for the purpose of Article 3.1.11.5., however it must be free of combustible content to be unsprinklered.



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.