

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0210

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date:	December 13, 2022
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2018
Subject:	Fire Blocks in Walls with Minor Combustible Components
Keywords:	Fire Blocks, Minor Combustible
Building Code Reference(s):	3.1.5.2., 3.1.11.2., 3.1.11.4., 3.1.11.7

Questions:

In a building where noncombustible construction is required, does the addition of acceptable minor combustible components within a wall assembly mean that the fire blocks are required within the walls or between vertical and horizontal concealed spaces?

No.

In a building where noncombustible construction is required, Sentence 3.1.5.2.(1) allows minor combustible components including wood backing within wall assemblies, intended for the attachment of handrails, fixtures, and similar items mounted on the wall surface.

Sentence 3.1.11.2.(1) requires fire blocks to block off concealed spaces within a wall assembly. Sentence 3.1.11.2.(2) waives the requirement for fire blocks under certain conditions, including that the exposed construction materials and any insulation within the wall space are noncombustible. Sentence 3.1.11.4.(1) requires fire blocks at all interconnections between concealed vertical and horizontal concealed spaces in ceilings and soffits, and at the end of each run and at each floor level in concealed spaces between stair stringers, in which the exposed construction materials have a flame spread rating more than 25. The fire blocks are required to conform with Article 3.1.11.7.

As stated in the Notes to Part 3, fire blocking is intended to reduce the risk of fire spread in combustible concealed spaces. Where minor combustible components are permitted by Sentence 3.1.5.2.(1), the type of construction is still considered to be noncombustible. To be acceptable, these combustible components must be minor and are assumed to not be significant or continuous, such that they would not allow fire spread within a wall assembly or between horizontal and vertical assemblies.



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.