

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 (Revised October 17, 2023)
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 if the attached garage contains 5 motor vehicles or fewer?

Interpretation:

Yes, a 1 h fire separation.

Article 9.10.9.16. regulates the requirements of fire separation between a storage garage (in this case the attached garage) and other occupancies (the secondary suite and the main dwelling unit).

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).

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).

Sentence 9.10.9.16.(3) waives the fire separation if the attached garage serves only the dwelling unit to which it is attached because it is considered as part of that dwelling unit.

In this case where the attached garage in a house with a secondary suite is shared between the two Sentence 9.10.9.16.(3) cannot be applied to waive the fire separation between the garage and the secondary suite and between the garage and the dwelling unit.

A 1 h fire separation would be required between the garage and the secondary suite since the attached garage contains 5 motor vehicles or fewer. Also, a 1 h fire separation is also required between the attached garage and the main dwelling unit.

Please refer to Interpretation 06-0051 for fire separations between the attached garage, the secondary suite and the main dwelling under different situations.



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.