

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0274

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date: September 22, 2023

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 2018

Subject: Fire Separation between a Garbage or Recycling Room and a Storage Garage

Keywords: Fire Separation, Storage Garage, Combustible Waste

Building Code Reference(s): 3.3.5.6.(1), 3.6.2.5.(1)

Question:

What fire-resistance rating is required for the fire separation between a room for storage of combustible waste and an adjacent storage (parking) garage?

Interpretation:

1.5 h.

Sentence 3.6.2.5.(1) requires that a room for the storage of combustible waste must be separated from the remainder of the building by at least a 1 h fire separation and must be sprinklered. There is a reference to an exception in Sentence 3.6.3.3.(9) which requires a 2 h fire separation for a room where a refuse chute discharges. This question is assumed to refer to a room without a refuse chute.

Sentence 3.3.5.6.(1) requires a 1.5 h fire separation between a storage garage and another occupancy, with limited exceptions for dwelling units which are not relevant for this question. In the BCBC, "Occupancy means the use or intended use of a building or part thereof for the shelter or support of persons, animals or property." The combustible waste is a form of property.

In a common configuration in a Part 3 building, a garbage room or recycling room is adjacent to a parking garage. The garbage room or recycling room serves non-parking occupancies in the building, and it is a different occupancy from the parking garage. As such, a 1.5 h fire separation is required between the garbage or recycling room and the parking garage, in conformance with Sentence 3.3.5.6.(1).



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.

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The Building Code Appeal Board has several rulings on a related subject, for the fire separation required between residential storage rooms and a parking garage, where the requirements are similar to those for a room for storage of combustible waste. This interpretation is consistent with those BCAB decisions. Refer to BCAB Decisions #1411, #1457, #1588 and #1650.



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