

# BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing  
**AIBC, EGBC, BOABC**

**File No: 18-0284**

**INTERPRETATION**

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Interpretation Date: October 17, 2023

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 2018

Subject: Townhouse Exterior Exit on Vehicle Access Route

Keywords: Townhouse, Exit, Vehicle Access

Building Code Reference(s):

## Question:

For a Part 9 building:

1. Is the exterior exit route from a townhouse unit permitted to discharge along a vehicle access route, to a public thoroughfare?
2. Does the Building Code regulate the slope of a public thoroughfare?

## Interpretation:

1. Yes, if the vehicle access route meets requirements for an exit.

The BCBC defines “exit” as:

Exit means that part of a means of egress, including doorways, that leads from the floor area it serves to a separate building, an open public thoroughfare, or an exterior open space protected from fire exposure from the building and having access to an open public thoroughfare.

The exterior exit route that leads to a public thoroughfare or an exterior open space as described above is part of the exit as defined by the BCBC, and is subject to the requirements for exits. There are many variations in vehicle access routes and it is difficult to generalize for all of them. The vehicle access route can be part of an exit if it is safe for use by persons exiting from the building and if it meets BCBC requirements for an exit.



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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For many townhouse developments the vehicle route can be part of the exit because there is minimal hazard to occupants from moving vehicles. This requires some judgement and should be reviewed with the authority having jurisdiction. Depending on the configuration, there may also be other applicable requirements such as handrails for walking routes on ramps.

2. No.

The slopes of public thoroughfares are not subject to BCBC requirements unless they are part of a building located on the public thoroughfare. Public thoroughfares are typically owned by the applicable local government and may be subject to other municipal engineering standards.



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