

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0177

INTERPRETATION

Page 1 of 2

Interpretation Date: May 17, 2022

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 2018, Book I: General

Subject: Spatial Separation of Detached Garage

Keywords: Accessory Building; Detached Garage; Spatial Separation; Maximum Aggregate Area; Unprotected Openings

Building Code Reference(s): 9.10.14.4.(8); 9.10.15.1.

Question(s):

Is a detached garage serving a single dwelling unit, with windows facing an adjoining property, permitted to comply with those provisions related to maximum aggregate area of unprotected openings in an exposing building face for storage garages in 9.10.14.4.(8).?

Interpretation:

No.

The provisions of 9.10.14.4.(8) are integral to the spatial separation provisions of Subsection 9.10.14., for which the application of this Subsection is determined by the application statement in Sentence 9.10.14.1.(1). Sentence (1) establishes that Subsection 9.10.14. only applies to those buildings which are not governed by Subsection 9.10.15.

The corresponding application of Subsection 9.10.15., is established by Sentence 9.10.15.1.(1), which states:

"9.10.15.1. Application

- 1) This Subsection applies to
- buildings* that contain only *dwelling units* and have no *dwelling unit* above another *dwelling unit*,
 - houses with a *secondary suite* including their common spaces, and
 - accessory *buildings* that serve a *building* described in Clauses (a) or (b).
- (See Note A-9.10.15.1.(1).)"

Clause (c) identifies that that this section applies to accessory buildings that serve a building described in Clauses (a) or (b). These building types are described in the corresponding note



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.

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0177

INTERPRETATION

Page 2 of 2

A-9.10.15.1.(1). Neither of the terms “detached garage” or “accessory building” are defined in the BC Building Code.

The term “accessory building” is commonly understood to mean an auxiliary building whose use and occupancy is bound to an associated principal building, which in this application is required to be a building containing dwelling units, with no unit above another (such as a row house), or a house with or without a secondary suite per Clause 9.10.15.1.(1)(c). This is consistent with the dictionary usage of the word “accessory” usually meaning “subordinate or supplementary; an adjunct”.

The term “detached garage”, within the context of a residential building such as house or row house, is also typically deemed an accessory building since its use and occupancy is bound to the principal building either by its intended use, design, or through development regulations.

Consequently, while the detached garage is not specifically identified in the application statement of 9.10.15.1.(1), it may be established that this is an accessory building. It therefore follows that the spatial separation provisions for determining the maximum aggregate area of unprotected openings must be determined by Articles 9.10.15.2. through 9.10.15.4.

It is further noted that these provisions include Sentence 9.10.15.4.(6), which is not only applicable to an accessory building to a structure governed by Subsection 9.10.15., but also identify that it is applicable to a detached garage – waiving the requirements for spatial separation to the principal building, but providing no specific relaxation to an adjacent property.

- “6) The limits on the area of glazed openings shall not apply to the exposing building face of a dwelling unit facing a detached garage or accessory building, where
- a) the detached garage or accessory building serves only one dwelling unit,
 - b) the detached garage or accessory building is located on the same property as that dwelling unit, and
 - c) the dwelling unit served by the detached garage or accessory building is the only major occupancy on the property.”

Lastly, it is cautioned that the interpretation of application of 9.10.15.4. to detached garages may differ in the City of Vancouver, as additional specific provisions have been added to address unprotected openings in storage garages in Subsection 9.10.15.



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.