


BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0275

INTERPRETATION

Page 1 of 2

Interpretation Date:	November 21, 2023
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2018, Book I: General
Subject:	Spatial Separation in Rural Areas
Keywords:	Spatial separation; Limiting distance; Rural fire fighting; Means of escape; Window clustering
Building Code Reference(s):	9.10.15.3.; 9.10.15.4.(3)
Question(s):	<p>Can Sentence 9.10.15.4.(3) be used independently to calculate the allowable amount of glazed openings for single dwellings, by omitting required openings for bedroom windows, where the limiting distance is less than 2 meters and the dwelling is constructed in a location with a delayed fire response?</p>
	<p>No – The requirements of Article 9.10.15.3. and Sentence 9.10.15.4.(3) address different concerns.</p> <p>The spatial separation requirements of the Building Code were developed on the basic assumption that glazed openings in an exposing building face are evenly spaced. The provisions of Sentence 9.10.15.4.(3), are intended to provide an upper limit to the degree that glazed openings may be clustered, in order to limit the excessive radiant thermal exposure to immediately adjacent surfaces. Because there are specific cases requiring addition consideration due to specific protection, or due to other needs, the provisions of Sentence 9.10.15.4.(3) include an exception for windows intended as a means of egress from dwelling units.</p> <p>In a rural setting, the provision of 9.10.15.3. must also be considered. The general assumption of the Building Code is that the effective firefighting response in a rural area could be delayed due to a variety of reasons including the availability of firefighters, equipment, longer distances, limited infrastructure, and so on. To accommodate this,</p>
	<p></p> <hr/> <p>Patrick Shek, P.Eng., CP, FEC, Committee Chair</p>

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: 18-0275

INTERPRETATION

Page 2 of 2

Article 9.10.15.3 requires that only half the actual limiting distance be considered in areas where fire response is expected to be delayed.

The application statement in Sentence 9.10.15.3.(1) provides an exemption for 9.10.15.4.(3) but this does not mean that the general provisions for spatial separation in rural environments can be ignored. Sentence 9.10.15.4.(3) provides provisions solely pertaining to the clustering of glazed openings and no exemption is provided for Sentence 9.10.15.4.(1). Thus, the only permission provided is that windows providing a means of egress from a bedroom may be clustered in a manner that exceeds 50% of the total allowable aggregate area of glazed openings. It is not the intention of this exception to allow the rural spatial separation restrictions to be circumvented by omitting windows providing a means of egress from the aggregate area of glazed opening.

In practice, this means that windows providing means of egress from bedrooms may be clustered in a manner that exceed the 50% maximum, but these must still be included in the overall permitted percentage of glazed opening, based on half the normal limiting distance where Article 9.10.15.3. applies.



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.