

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 24-0035

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date: August 13, 2024

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 2024

Subject: Exhaust Air Inlet as a Return Air Inlet in Dwelling Unit

Keywords: HRV, Exhaust Air, Return Air

Building Code Reference(s): 9.33.6.12.(2), 9.32.3.4.(4)

Question:

In a dwelling unit with a heat recovery ventilator (HRV), can an inlet to an exhaust air duct satisfy the requirement for a return air inlet on each floor?

Interpretation:

Yes.

Sentence 9.33.6.12.(2) states:

“Except for unfinished areas and floor levels which are less than 900 mm above or below an adjacent floor level which is provided with a return-air inlet, at least one return-air inlet shall be provided in each floor level in a dwelling unit.”

The BCBC does not directly address whether an inlet to an exhaust air duct, instead of an inlet to a return air duct, can satisfy this requirement. However, the intent statement for Sentence 9.33.6.12.(2) refers to considerations including maintaining adequate air temperatures and avoiding inadequate ventilation. This requires air movement through the floor level, which can be accomplished with either an exhaust air duct or a return air duct.

Sentence 9.32.3.4.(4) requires that, where an HRV is the principal ventilation system, the HRV exhaust duct shall draw exhaust air from one or more indoor inlets of which at least one is located at least 2 m above the floor of the uppermost floor level. This is also intended to promote air movement through the unit. Therefore, it is interpreted that an inlet to an exhaust air duct can satisfy the requirement of Sentence 9.33.6.12.(2) for an inlet to a return air duct.



Patrick Shek, P.Eng., CP, FEC, Committee Chair

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