

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 24-0017

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date:	April 15, 2025
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2024
Subject:	Doorway Width for One Bathroom in a Dwelling Unit
Keywords:	Doorway, Dwelling Unit, Adaptable, Accessible
Building Code Reference(s):	3.8.2.3.(2), 3.8.2.13.(1), 3.8.3.1.(1), 3.8.3.6.(3), 3.8.5

Question:

Does Sentence 3.8.3.6.(3) require every dwelling unit in an apartment building to have a bathroom with a clear doorway opening width of at least 850 mm?

Interpretation

No.

A bathroom with a clear doorway opening of at least 850 mm is required only in a dwelling unit that is required to be adaptable or accessible.

Sentence 3.8.3.6.(3) states:

3) Doorways in a path of travel to at least one bathroom within a *suite of residential occupancy* shall have a clear width not less than 850 mm when measured in accordance with Sentence (2). (See Note A-3.8.3.6.(3).)

The clear width is required to be measured with the door in the open position, and an 850 mm clear doorway width typically requires at least a 914 mm (standard 3 ft.) wide door.

In previous editions of the BCBC, dwelling units and apartment buildings were exempted from most of the requirements of Section 3.8 (Accessibility). In the 2024 BCBC, the types of exempted buildings have been reduced, and there is no general exemption for dwelling units and apartment buildings.



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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Clause 3.8.2.3.(2)(l) states that access is not required:

- l) *within a suite of residential occupancy that has not been designated by this Code or an authority having jurisdiction to be accessible or designed and constructed as an adaptable dwelling unit, or*

Sentence 3.8.5.1.(1) states that Subsection 3.8.5 “Adaptable Dwelling Units” applies to one storey dwelling units served by an accessible interior public corridor and an accessible common entrance, so units that do not have these entrances are not required to be adaptable. Sentence 3.8.5.4.(3) requires doorways with a clear opening width of at least 850 mm for certain rooms within adaptable dwelling units, including to an adaptable bathroom.

Please refer to the Province of BC technical bulletins at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/construction-industry/building-codes-standards/bc-codes/technical-bulletins> for further clarification of the required number of adaptable units, and the timing of application of the requirements.

The BCBC does not require residential suites to be accessible, except that Sentence 3.8.2.13.(1) requires at least 1 in 20 or part thereof of sleeping rooms or bed spaces to be accessible:

- in hotels and motels, and
- not including apartments and condominiums and the buildings described in Clause 3.8.2.1.(1)(a) (which are smaller residential buildings that are not required to be accessible), in other buildings or parts of buildings used for residential major occupancies.

For these uses, and where an authority having jurisdiction requires a residential suite to be accessible as stated in Clause 3.8.2.3.(2)(l), then the access requirements of Subsection 3.8.3. are applicable to that suite, sleeping room or bed space, and one bathroom in the unit requires a clear doorway width of at least 850 mm. This requirement came into effect on March 8, 2024 with the 2024 BCBC and it is not deferred because it is not part of the requirements for adaptable dwelling units.



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