

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 24-0113

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date: July 15, 2025

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 2024

Subject: Fire Dampers at Floor Level Instead of Fire-Separated Vertical Service Spaces

Keywords: Fire Damper, Smoke/Fire Damper, Vertical Service Space

Building Code Reference(s): 3.1.8., 3.6.3.1.(1)

Question:

If a vertical duct passing through multiple storeys with fire-rated floor assemblies is provided with fire dampers or (where required) smoke/fire dampers at floor levels, is the duct still required to be fire-separated from the floor areas?

Interpretation:

No.

Sentence 3.6.3.1.(1) requires a fire separation between a vertical service space and adjacent floor areas. The BCBC defines vertical service space as:

Vertical service space means a shaft oriented essentially vertically that is provided in a building to facilitate the installation of building services including mechanical, electrical and plumbing installations and facilities such as elevators, refuse chutes and linen chutes.

The purpose of the fire separation required by Sentence 3.6.3.1.(1) is to maintain an acceptable floor-to-floor fire separation where a service passes through an opening in the floor (there may be other situations where the service within the space requires protection, such as some emergency conductors, but those situations are not addressed by this interpretation). Where there is no shaft around the duct, there is no vertical service space. In that case, fire dampers or smoke/fire dampers installed as per Subsection 3.1.8. may be installed to maintain the floor fire separations.

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.