

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 24-0115

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date: September 16, 2025

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 2024

Subject: Heating and Cooling Systems in Houses with
Secondary Suites

Keywords: Heating, Cooling, Secondary Suite

Building Code Reference(s): 9.32.3.2.(4), 9.32.3.2.(5), 9.33.1.1.(3), 9.33.4.1.(1),
9.33.5.1.(1)

Question:

In a house with a secondary suite, does each dwelling unit require heating and cooling systems that are separate from the systems serving the other unit?

Interpretation:

No.

In a house with a secondary suite, Sentence 9.33.1.1.(3) requires that air duct distribution systems serving one of the dwelling units shall not be interconnected with other parts of the house, unless the systems are designed and installed to prevent the circulation of smoke in accordance with Sentence 9.32.3.2.(4), and fire dampers are installed in accordance with Sentence 9.32.3.2.(5). Where the systems serve both dwelling units, Sentence 9.32.3.2.(4) requires the systems to be designed and installed to prevent the circulation of smoke upon a signal from a duct-mounted smoke detector.

It is clear from these references that the BCBC permits a single heating and cooling system to serve both dwelling units in a house with a secondary suite, provided the required features are installed in the systems. Sentence 9.33.5.1.(1) refers to the method of determining the required capacity of heating and cooling appliances serving a single dwelling unit. Sentence 9.33.5.1.(1) is not intended to restrict a heating and cooling system from serving more than a single dwelling unit. Good practice is required to design the capacity of the heating and cooling systems serving 2 suites as per Sentence 9.33.4.1.(1).



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.