BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing

AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

Interpretation Date:	March 10, 2026
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2024
Subject:	Application of 9.10.14 or 9.10.15 to Multi-Unit Buildings
Keywords:	Spatial Separation, unit above another dwelling unit
Building Code Reference(s):	9.10.14.1.; 9.10.15.1.

Question:

Where a minor portion of a dwelling unit's floor area is located above a portion of an adjacent dwelling unit (i.e., partial overlap), is it considered to be *"a dwelling unit above another dwelling unit"* for the purpose of determining the application of Article 9.10.14. or 9.10.15.?

Interpretation:

Yes.

The presence of any vertical superimposition, including partial or minimal overlap, constitutes "a dwelling unit above another dwelling unit" condition under the code.

Where this condition exists, Article 9.10.14. applies, and Article 9.10.15. will not apply, regardless of the extent of overlap or the level of fire-resistance protection provided within the overlapped area.

The provision of 1 h fire separations, the absence of unprotected openings, or the limited size of the overlap is not a consideration in determining whether 9.10.14 or 9.10.15 is applied for determining spatial separation requirements for a building.

(Note: specific designs may be appropriate for an alternative solution submission for review by the AHJ)

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.