
STANDATA interpretation 23-BCI-012/20-PCB-014/20-GCB-018/21-ECB-009

Building/Plumbing/Gas/Electrical

Rowhousing buildings with five or more dwelling units

Date Issued: January 2025

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Purpose

To clarify the application for professional involvement for building services and systems for buildings classified as residential occupancy identified as a multiple-family dwelling containing five or more dwelling units in a rowhouse configuration.

Discussion

Division C, Subclause 2.4.1.1.(1)(b)(ii) of the National Building Code – 2023 Alberta Edition does not require professional involvement where a multiple-family dwelling contains four dwelling units or less. Division C, Sentence 2.4.1.1.(3), which applies to buildings other than those described in Sentence (1), therefore requires multiple-family dwellings with five or more dwelling units to have the drawings and specifications authenticated by one or more registered professionals as applicable.

Division C, Sentence 2.4.1.1.(3) has been interpreted by some to mean that every aspect of a residential occupancy that is a multiple-family dwelling containing five or more dwelling units in a rowhouse configuration, must be designed by a registered professional qualified to engage in each respective area of the practice of architecture and engineering.

When in a rowhouse configuration (no dwelling unit above another), many building services are provided separately to each dwelling unit, or systems are contained wholly within each dwelling unit, and thus, each service or system is designed the same way they would be for a detached house or for rowhousing buildings with four or less dwelling units. It is not the intent of the code to require authentication by one or more registered professionals for all services or systems serving (or contained wholly within) an individual dwelling unit where there is no dwelling unit above another dwelling unit.

Code References

Article 2.4.1.1. of Division C

2.4.1.1.

1) Except as required by Sentence (4), involvement of a *registered professional* is not required for a *building*

a) 3 storeys or less in *building height*, classified as an *assembly, care, treatment or detention occupancy* that,

i) if 1 storey in *building height*, has a *building area* of 300 m² or less,

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- ii) if 2 storeys in *building height*, has a *building area* of 150 m² or less, or
- iii) if 3 storeys in *building height*, has a *building area* of 100 m² or less,
- b) classified as a *residential occupancy* that is
 - i) a single-family dwelling, or
 - ii) a multiple-family dwelling that contains 4 *dwelling units* or less,
- c) 3 storeys or less in *building height*, classified as a *residential occupancy*, as a hotel, motel or similar use that,
 - i) if 1 storey in *building height*, has a *building area* of 400 m² or less,
 - ii) if 2 storeys in *building height*, has a *building area* of 200 m² or less, or
 - iii) if 3 storeys in *building height*, has a *building area* of 130 m² or less,
- d) 3 storeys or less in *building height*, classified as a *business and personal services occupancy*, *mercantile occupancy* or *industrial occupancy* that,
 - i) if 1 storey in *building height*, has a *building area* of 500 m² or less,
 - ii) if 2 storeys in *building height*, has a *building area* of 250 m² or less, or
 - iii) if 3 storeys in *building height*, has a *building area* of 165 m² or less,
- e) that is a farm *building* not for public use, or
- f) classified as a relocatable industrial camp *building*.

2) For the purposes of Sentence (1), *secondary suites* need not be considered as *dwelling units*.

3) For *buildings* other than those described in Sentence (1), the drawings and specifications shall be authenticated by one or more *registered professionals* qualified to engage in the appropriate combination of those areas of the practice of architecture and engineering that are applicable to the project.

4) If the size or complexity of a *project* may give rise to special safety concerns, the *authority having jurisdiction* may require the involvement of one or more *registered professionals* to authenticate all or part of the drawings and specifications and perform *field reviews*.

5) Drawings and specifications required to be authenticated by a *registered professional* shall be authenticated by the respective professional in accordance with the requirements of the Architects Act or the Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act.

Application

The following interpretation applies to a building classified as a residential occupancy that is a multiple-family dwelling containing five or more dwelling units in a rowhouse configuration and has no other dwelling unit above or below it.

Interpretation

Drawings and specifications authenticated by a registered professional are not applicable for the following systems within individual dwelling units:

1. The electrical system beginning at the electrical meter.
2. The water supply system beginning at the water meter.
3. The drainage system beginning at the building drain.

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4. The gas system beginning at the gas meter.
5. The HVAC system serving a dwelling unit.

This INTERPRETATION is applicable throughout the Province of Alberta.

Unless stated otherwise, all Code references in this STANDATA are to the National Building Code – 2023 Alberta Edition

Issued by the Provincial Building, Plumbing, Gas and Electrical Administrators

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