

## ROW HOUSING, DUPLEXES AND CONDOMINIUMS

### DISCUSSION

For buildings of residential occupancy (not including hotels and motels), where the building contains no dwelling units located in whole or in part above another dwelling unit, there are a number of property ownership scenarios that can exist. The purpose of this STANDATA is to clarify the requirements for:

- (a) Fire separations between dwelling units,
- (b) Measurement of limiting distances, and
- (c) Construction requirements for exterior walls which meet at an angle of 135° or less at a fire separation,

for the various ownership scenarios that can exist in row houses and duplexes, such as traditional condominiums or bare land condominiums.

Bare land condominiums are, for the purposes of this STANDATA, condominium developments of residential occupancy, where:

1. No dwelling unit is located above another dwelling unit,
2. Commonly owned real property may separate any building from the outermost property line of the condominium development,
3. Each home owner has title to the real property on which his condominium is located, which may extend beyond the building to provide front, back, and/or side yards, and
4. The condominium is registered under the Condominium Property Act.

Note: The Condominium Property Act defines a “bare land unit” as meaning “in the case other than that of a building, land that is situated within a parcel and described as a unit in a condominium plan by reference to boundaries governed by monuments placed pursuant to the provisions of the Surveys Act respecting subdivision surveys.”

Unless stated otherwise, all Code references in this STANDATA are to Division B of the Alberta Building Code 2006.

**TRADITIONAL OWNERSHIP**

Traditional property ownership of duplexes and/or row housing involves each dwelling unit in the building being situated on its own legally registered property with a property line that runs between the dwelling units (as illustrated in Figure 1). In this case, each dwelling unit is considered a separate building.

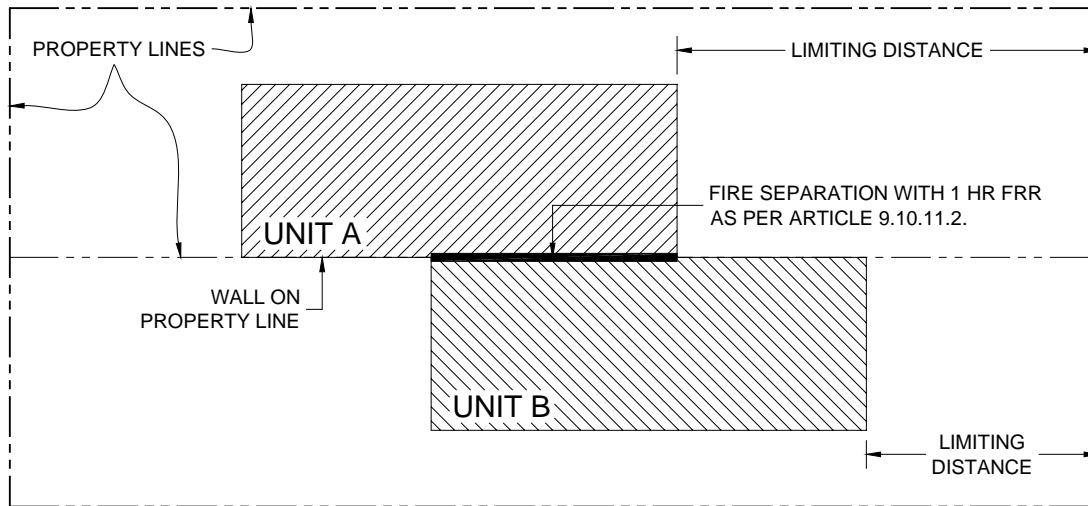


Figure 1 - TRADITIONAL OWNERSHIP<sup>1</sup>

**TRADITIONAL CONDOMINIUMS**

Traditional condominium ownership of duplexes and/or row housing involves two or more dwelling units being situated on a common piece of property that is subdivided to produce property that exactly match the footprint of the dwelling units within the common property (as illustrated in Figure 2). In this case, each dwelling unit is considered to be a separate suite within one building of residential occupancy.

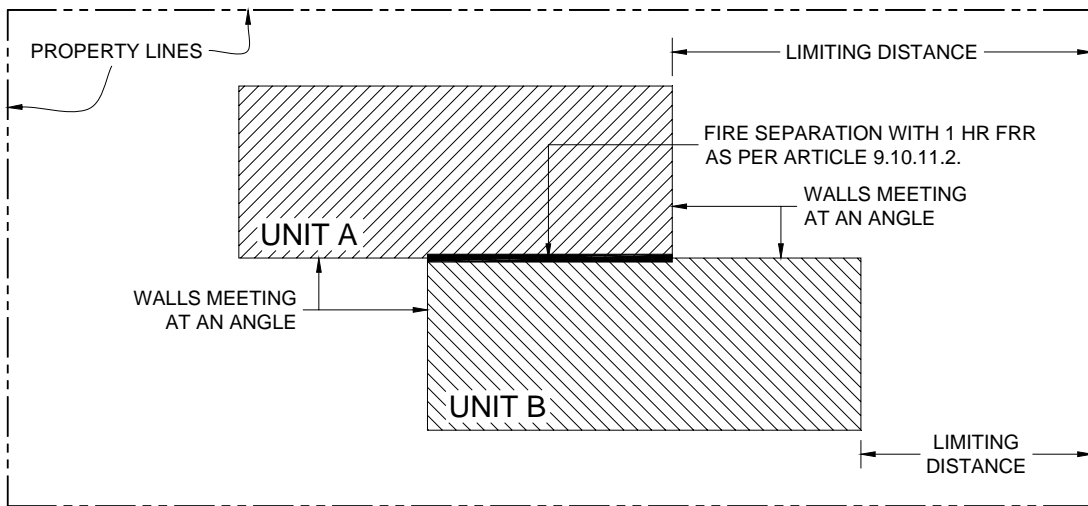


Figure 2 - TRADITIONAL CONDOMINIUM<sup>1</sup>

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**BARE LAND CONDOMINIUMS**

Bare land condominium ownership of duplexes and/or row housing is similar to a traditional condominium, except that a parcel of open land, intended to function as a front, back and/or side yard, adjacent to each unit is included within the boundaries of each unit (as illustrated in Figure 3). In this case, each dwelling unit is considered to be a separate suite within one building of residential occupancy.

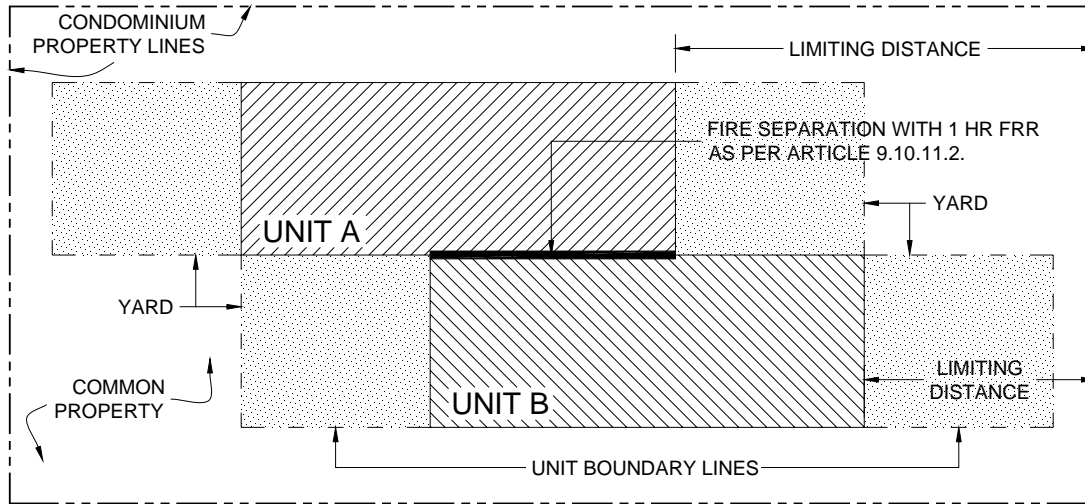


Figure 3 - BARE LAND CONDOMINIUM

**CODE REFERENCES**

1. Article 9.10.11.2. states:

**9.10.11.2. Firewalls Not Required**

- 1) In a *building of residential occupancy* in which there is no *dwelling unit* above another *dwelling unit*, a *party wall* on a property line between *dwelling units* need not be constructed as a *firewall* provided it is constructed as a *fire separation* having not less than a 1 h *fire-resistance rating*.
- 2) The wall described in Sentence (1) shall provide continuous protection from the top of the footings to the underside of the roof deck.
- 3) Any space between the top of the wall described in Sentence (1) and the roof deck shall be tightly filled with mineral wool or *noncombustible* material.

2. Article 9.10.12.3. states:

**9.10.12.3. Exterior Walls Meeting at an Angle**

- 1) Except as provided in Articles 9.9.4.5. and 9.10.14.5., and in *sprinklered buildings*, where exterior walls of a *building* meet at an external angle of 135° or less, the horizontal distance from an opening in one wall to an opening in the other wall shall be not less than 1.2 m, if the openings are in different *fire compartments*.
- 2) The exterior wall of each *fire compartment* referred to in Sentence (1) within the 1.2 m distance shall have a *fire-resistance rating* not less than that required for the interior vertical *fire separation* between the compartment and the remainder of the *building*.

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## 3. Article 9.10.15.4. states:

**9.10.15.4. Glazed Openings in Exposing Building Face**

**1)** Except as provided in Sentence (3), the maximum aggregate area of glazed openings in an *exposing building face* shall

- a) conform to Table 9.10.15.4.,
- b) conform to Subsection 3.2.3., or
- c) be equal to or less than the *limiting distance* squared.

**2)** Where the limits on the area of glazed openings are determined for individual portions of the exterior wall, as described in Subclause 9.10.15.2.(1)(b)(iii), the maximum aggregate area of glazed openings for any portion shall conform to the values in the row of Table 9.10.15.4. corresponding to the maximum total area of *exposing building face* (see column 1 of the Table) that is equal to the sum of all portions of the *exposing building face*. (See Appendix A.)

**3)** The limits on the area of glazed openings shall not apply to the *exposing building face* of a *dwelling unit* facing a detached garage or accessory *building*, where

- a) the detached garage or accessory *building* serves only one *dwelling unit*,
- b) the detached garage or accessory *building* is located on the same property as that *dwelling unit*, and
- c) the *dwelling unit* served by the detached garage or accessory *building* is the only *major occupancy* on the property.

## 4. Sentence 9.10.15.5.(2) states:

**9.10.15.5. Construction of Exposing Building Face of Houses**

...

**2)** Sentence (1) does not apply where

- a) the *limiting distance* is 1.2 m or more,
- b) the *limiting distance* is less than 1.2 m but not less than 0.6 m, provided that the *exposing building face* has a *fire-resistance rating* of not less than 45 min, or
- c) the *limiting distance* is less than 0.6 m, provided that the *exposing building face* has a *fire-resistance rating* of not less than 45 min and is clad with *noncombustible* material.



## INTERPRETATION

1. In a traditional ownership scenario, the following provisions of the Alberta Building Code 2006 would apply:

- a. **Fire Separations:** The fire separation between dwelling units is to be constructed as a party wall having a fire-resistance rating of not less than one hour, continuous from the top of the footings to the underside of the roof deck. [Article 9.10.11.2.]
- b. **Limiting Distances:** Limiting distances are measured to the property lines (or to a line drawn between two buildings on the same property).
- c. **Wall Construction:** Exterior walls constructed along the property line are to have a fire-resistance rating of not less than 45 min and are to be clad with noncombustible material. Window openings are not permitted. [Articles 9.10.15.4. and Sentence 9.10.15.5.(2)]

Where two exterior walls meet at an angle of 135° or less at a fire separation, there shall be no openings in the exterior wall of one building within 1.2 m of an opening in the exterior wall in the second building. Also, the wall within the 1.2 m shall have a fire-resistance rating not less than one hour. [Article 9.10.12.3.]

2. In a traditional condominium ownership scenario, the following provisions of the Alberta Building Code 2006 would apply:

- d. **Fire Separations:** The fire separation between dwelling units is to be constructed as a party wall having a fire-resistance rating of not less than one hour, continuous from the top of the footings to the underside of the roof deck. [Article 9.10.11.2.]
- e. **Limiting Distances:** Limiting distances are to be measured to the property lines of the condominium project (or to a line drawn between two buildings in the same condominium project), not to the condominium unit property lines.

**Wall Construction:** Where two exterior walls meet at an angle of 135° or less at a fire separation, there shall be no openings in the exterior wall of one building within 1.2 m of an opening in the exterior wall in the second building. Also, the wall within the 1.2 m shall have a fire-resistance rating not less than one hour. [Article 9.10.12.3.]



3. In a bare land condominium ownership scenario, the following provisions of the Alberta Building Code 2006 would apply:

- f. **Fire Separations:** The fire separation between dwelling units is to be constructed as a party wall having a fire-resistance rating of not less than one hour, continuous from the top of the footings to the underside of the roof deck. [Article 9.10.11.2.]
- g. **Limiting Distances:** Limiting distances are to be measured to the property lines of the condominium project (or to a line drawn between two buildings in the same condominium project), not to the condominium unit property lines or to the unit boundary lines.

**Wall Construction:** Where two exterior walls meet at an angle of 135° or less at a fire separation, there shall be no openings in the exterior wall of one building within 1.2 m of an opening in the exterior wall in the second building. Also, the wall within the 1.2 m shall have a fire-resistance rating not less than one hour. [Article 9.10.12.3.]

This INTERPRETATION is applicable throughout the province of Alberta.

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<sup>1</sup> Illustrations are for clarification only and are not intended to limit the design of any particular project.

