

January, 2013
BUILDING DIVISION

RESIDENTIAL UNIT ABOVE ANOTHER UNIT

This guide has been prepared to assist the applicant in applying for a building permit to construct multi-family residential buildings.

From time to time, buildings containing residential dwelling units, usually townhouses, are designed with some degree of overlap between the adjoining units and it should be recognized that the design may be beyond the letter of the Code with regard to the concept of "no unit above another unit". The BC Building Code recognizes that when a dwelling unit is located above another dwelling unit there is a greater issue of life and fire safety than when units are separated from the foundation to the underside of the roof with a continuous vertical fire separation.

In general, the requirements of the BC Building Code are clear when there is no dwelling unit above another dwelling unit or suite. However, the case has been made that if a unit overlaps another unit or suite by a relatively small amount, there is justification for exemption from the more restrictive requirements.

Each building permit application for residential units overlapping each other will be reviewed on an individual basis. In a building where the floor area of one dwelling unit overlaps the floor area of another dwelling unit by not more than 10% of the floor area AND by not more than 1.2 metres (4 feet) in horizontal distance at any point, the City will consider an alternative solution proposal under Clause 1.2.1.1.(1)(b) of Division A of the BC Building Code 2012.

In addition, given the complex nature of sound transmission, the involvement of an Acoustical Engineer is required before an alternative solution report is accepted or a building permit is issued.

Related References in Division B of the BC Building Code 2012	
Sentence 3.2.2.50.(6):	No dwelling unit above another dwelling unit.
Sentence 3.2.2.51.(4):	No dwelling unit above another dwelling unit.
Sentence 3.2.2.52.(4):	No dwelling unit above another dwelling unit.
Sentence 3.2.2.53.(4):	No dwelling unit above another dwelling unit.
Sentence 9.9.9.1.(2):	A dwelling unit is not located above or below another suite.
Sentence 9.10.8.10.(1):	A dwelling unit, which has no other dwelling unit above or below it.
Sentence 9.10.11.2.(1):	No dwelling unit above another dwelling unit.
Sentence 9.10.15.1.(1):	No dwelling unit above another dwelling unit.
Sentence 9.10.20.1(3):	Buildings containing only dwelling units in which there is no dwelling unit above another dwelling unit.

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