

Bulletin 2020-001-BLD

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Installation of Physical Barriers for COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control

The intent of this Bulletin is to advise business operators of potential impacts the installation of physical distancing measures may have on critical building life safety systems.

As part of Phase 2 of the [British Columbia Restart Plan](#) (Returning to Safe Operation), businesses may choose to install barriers to help reduce potential exposure and cross-contamination where physical distancing measures cannot be achieved. Barrier types may include drapes, curtains, and decorative materials, counter-mounted and freestanding plexiglass barriers, floor-mounted freestanding pre-fabricated dividers, and wood-framed, steel-framed, or glass walls. Information on effective barrier design is available from WorkSafeBC at:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/covid-19-health-safety-designing-effective-barriers?lang=en>.

Compliance with Provincial building life safety regulations is the responsibility of the building owner. These regulations are available online at: <http://www.bccodes.ca/index.html>. Business operators must take these regulations into consideration when selecting the material type and placement of physical barriers. In particular, the BC Fire Code and BC Building Code include requirements relating to:

- Flame-retardant and non-combustible materials
- Fire detection and suppression systems
- Structural capacities of barriers, guards, and dividers
- Exit path widths and travel distance to exits
- Accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities

Proposed barriers that could potentially impact Provincial building life safety regulations may require City-issued construction permits prior to installation. It is recommended that a qualified Registered Professional (Architect or Professional Engineer) be retained to review these proposed installations and prepare Permit applications as deemed necessary.

Information on the City's construction permit application process is available online at: <https://www.cnv.org/permits>.