

No. B07-06
May 2007

Free Standing Racking Storage Systems 2006 BC Building Code

With the implementation of the 2006 British Columbia Building Code (BCBC), discussions have arisen as to the Building Code's application to free standing racking storage systems. These racking storage systems are structurally independent of a building but are commonly anchored to the building's floor slab.

It is the opinion of the Building Policy Branch free standing rack storage systems are not regulated by the BC Building Code. When racking systems are not free standing but connected to the building's structure, they should be considered fixtures (Category 11 or 12) when using Table 4.1.8.17. of the BCBC. We consider that this opinion is supported in paragraph 224 and 225 of Commentary J, User's Guide – NBC 2005 Structural Commentaries (Part 4 of Division B).

It is not the intention of this bulletin to suggest that structural/seismic analysis can be ignored for free standing racking systems, rather, good engineering principles must be used for appropriate structural/seismic design. The Rack Manufacturers Institute is one source of design information. Local governments may continue to regulate/permit these structures through their bylaws.

Designers should be cognisant of the potential impact free standing racking may have on the building's structure and equipment (e.g., fire sprinklers) and account for this in the structure's or building's design.

The Building Policy Branch acknowledges this bulletin may result in a change to some existing processes. The Branch will work with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists, local government building officials and industry to resolve those problems that impact public safety.

Building Policy Branch
Office of Housing and Construction Standards
Ministry of Forests & Range
And Minister Responsible for Housing

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