BUILDING BULLETIN
BRACED WALL BANDS
FOR LATERAL BRACING

JULY 15, 2025 *Bulletin No 25-01*

Building Bulletin: Braced Wall Bands – BC BC 2024 Part 9

General Information

The purpose of this bulletin is to inform architects, engineers, developers, builders, subcontractors, designers and homeowners of the new lateral bracing requirements (due to wind or seismic loads) of the 2024 BC Building Code, New Wood Frame Part 9 Building and Additions which took effect as of March 10, 2025.

What is a Braced Wall Band?

- *A continuous imaginary band up to 1.2m wide surrounding the perimeter of the building and extending vertically & horizontally throughout.*

What is a Braced Wall Panel?

- *Portions of walls where the exterior sheathing and interior finish are designed and installed to provide required resistance to laterals loads due to seismic forces and wind.*
- *Acceptable materials for sheathing are: OSB, plywood, diagonal plank sheathing, or gypsum board.*
- *Located within the Braced Wall Band & laterally supported at the top and bottom.*
- *Panels may be constructed of various materials permitted along a Braced Wall Band within the same storey, provided panels of WSP-A and WSP-B framing type are substituted for panels of GWB framing type.*

Types of materials – Use Table 9.23.3.5 C of the 2024 BCBC for reference.

- *DWB – Diagonal Wall Board*
- *GWB – Gypsum Wall Board*
- *WSP – Wood Sheathed Panel*
- *The most common are:*
    - *WSP-B = 11mm (7/16”) plywood, OSB or waterboard for 600mm (24”) stud spacing.*
    - *GWB-B=12.5mm (1/2”) with 400mm (16”) stud spacing*

Design Approaches – Refer to Section 9.23.13.1 of the 2024 BCBC

- *Prescriptive or part 4 approach*
    i. *Calculation Approach – 9.23.13.4 to 9.13.10*
    ii. *Simplified Approach – 9.23.13.11*
    iii. *Part 4 (Structural Engineering) or CWC Guide (Canadian Wood Council)*

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Construction Considerations:

- *Normal weight construction, the average dead weight per storey shall not exceed:*
  - *i. 0.5 kPa for floors and 0.5 kPa for partitions and interior walls*
  - *ii. 0.5 kPa for the roof, and*
  - *iii. 0.4 kPa for exterior walls*
- *Heavy weight construction, the average dead weight per storey shall not exceed:*
  - *i. 1.5 kPa for floors and 0.5 kPa for partitions and interior walls*
  - *ii. 1.0 kPa for the roof, or*
  - *iii. 1.2 kPa for exterior walls*
- *Minimum lengths and locations of braced wall panels per Table 9.23.13.5.*
- *Double top plates with top plate splice nailing requirements as per Table 9.23.11.4 A &B.*
- *Increased anchorage requirements as per Table 9.23.6.1.*
- *Increased nailing requirements for sheathing as per Table 9.23.3.5*
- *Increased blocking requirements as per Table9.23.3.5 C – Note 7*
- *Attachment of wall top plates to diaphragm structure as per 9.23.13.5.3*

Exemptions: *(read the associated parts of the code carefully to ensure the design meets the exemption requirements)*

- *Stepped foundation cripple walls per 9.23.13.9*
- *Small covered deck per 9.23.13.10.2*
- *Detached garages and the front wall of attached garages serving a single dwelling unit are exempt, provided the walls do not support a floor. As per 9.23.13.10.3*
- *Front walls in attached garages serving a single dwelling unit are exempt as per 9.23.13.10.4*
- *Application to existing Buildings (renovations) shall to refer to section 1.1.1.2 of the 2024 BCBC – "where a building is altered, rehabilitated, renovated or repaired, or there is a change in occupancy, the level of life safety and building performance shall not be decreased below a level that already exists"*

Design Drawings should include:

- *A Lateral bracing plan - with a legend to indicate:*
  - *i. The type of braced wall panel with all the design criteria*
  - *ii. Maximum 3.1m in height, measured from the bottom of the bottom plate to the top of the top plate. - Portions of the wall within a braced wall band can be taller than 3.1m as permitted in other sections of the code, but the braced wall panel themselves must not be taller than 3.1m. A wall framed under a scissor truss may have sections taller than 3.1m, as an example.*
  - *iii. The length, width, distance between band centerlines and distance from the end of the braced wall band to the edge of the first braced wall panel. (With Dimensions)*

iv. *Light or heavy construction*
v. *Is the Design standard BCBC Part 9 or Part 4 ? (Structural Engineer)*
vi. *Details with calculations showing the required and provided minimum bracing length for each braced wall band.*
vii. *Any exemptions, trade offs or additional system considerations used in the design, including dimensions.*

- *Floor plans should include:*
  i. *All braced wall bands and dimensions (coloured)*
  ii. *Grid lines to assist in confirming band alignment on each floor*
  iii. *Centreline off all braced wall bands*
  iv. *All braced wall panel dimensions.*
- *Cross section views should include:*
  i. *Braced wall bands that are full storey in height and aligned with bands on any storeys above and below.*
  ii. *Anchor size and spacing as per 9.23.6.1*
  iii. *Materials used in the braced wall panel as per 9.23.13.6*
  iv. *Fastener size and spacing as per 9.23.3.5*

This bulletin is for informational purposes only. Please be sure to consult the District of Summerland Bylaws and Part 9 of the BC Building Code 2024