

Zero Lot Line Variance DC-129 (ZLL-DC129-PMA-01)

Variance

Variance - 01

Reason for the Variance

In Rocky View County, home builders are currently permitted to construct houses adjacent to each other in the Direct Control District DC - 129, with only a 1.8 meters separation between the exposed building faces. One house is built at a limiting distance of 1.8 meters from the property line (the "easement" side), while the neighboring house is constructed with a zero-limiting distance from the property line (the "zero" side). The roof soffit and overhang of this neighboring house extend beyond the property line. As per Sentence 9.10.15.5.(8) of Division B in the current National Building Code – Alberta Edition, roof soffits may project up to 0.45 meters from the property line.

(For a single detached dwelling, one side setback can be reduced to 0.0 m if the owners of both the building and neighboring properties register a 1.8 m private maintenance easement allowing a 0.3 m eave encroachment, a 0.6 m footing encroachment, and ensure roof drainage stays within the building's parcel.)



Code Reference

Current National Building Code – Alberta Edition – Definitions
Rocky View County Land Use Bylaw DC-129 (ZLL-DC129-PMA-01)



Approved Method of Variance

The following construction specifications are required for the exposing building faces on the side walls of adjacent houses, to be implemented as follows:

1. The outer face of all stories (1-3) of the exterior wall finish at a zero limiting distance must align with the property line or stay within the property of the building it's attached to. Any other setups will need a separate variance request.
2. All soffits, front or rear balconies, and projections facing or adjacent to an exposing building face at a zero limiting distance shall have no glazed or unprotected mechanical openings, and the entire underside of all soffits and balcony ceilings shall be protected with a minimum of 15.9 mm (5/8") Type X gypsum sheathing, or equivalent, and finished with a non-vented metal soffit system, and all exposed beams and support columns shall provide a minimum 45-minute fire-resistance rating, achieved through mass timber construction in accordance with Article 9.10.6.2. and Table 3.1.4.7. or be protected with noncombustible cladding.

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3. Exterior Cladding must be:
 - i) Non-combustible fiber cement board over accepted OSB or a minimum 15.9mm (5/8") Type X gypsum sheathing, or equivalent. Protection above the soffit to the roof sheathing underside must use a minimum 15.9mm Type X gypsum sheathing with fully supported edges.
 - ii) Cementitious stucco as per Subsection 9.28 of Division B of the National Building Code – Alberta Edition, installed over accepted OSB or equivalent. Protection above the soffit to the roof sheathing underside must use 15.9mm Type X gypsum sheathing with fully supported edges.
 - iii) Vinyl siding per CAN/CGSB-41.24, installed over a minimum of 15.9mm Type X gypsum sheathing on both side walls. Sheathing panels should extend to the roof sheathing underside, with all joints fully supported on studs or plates. Taping is not required.
4. Interior gypsum board shall be a minimum 12.7 mm (1/2") Type X gypsum board on both side walls of both houses, with all joints fully supported, taped, and finished.
5. The ceiling of the uppermost floor in both houses requires a minimum 12.7 mm (1/2") Type X gypsum board.
6. Three-Storey House – No glazed or unprotected mechanical openings are allowed on the exposing face on the 3rd story side walls, nor on the zero side below a 1.2m limiting distance. Unprotected mechanical and glazed openings on the 1st and 2nd floors are allowed on the zero side at a 1.2m or greater limiting distance. Glazed openings should follow 9.10.15 and Table 9.10.15.4. On the easement side with a 1.8m limiting distance, a maximum of 7.6% glazed opening area from grade to the underside of the 2nd-floor ceiling is allowed. If the limiting distance on the easement side is greater than 1.8m, glazed openings can be calculated as per 9.10.15 and Table 9.10.15.4. No individual opening should exceed 3.8% of the exposing building face from grade to the underside of the 2nd-floor ceiling only. The 3rd-floor wall area is not included in the calculations.
 - (Note: If any floor in a building isn't sprinklered and fire department response takes over 10 minutes in 10% or more of calls, then use half the actual limiting distance to meet the requirements of glazed openings in 9.10.15 and table 9.10.15.4).
7. One-Two Storey House – No glazed or unprotected mechanical openings are permitted on the exposing face on the zero side with a limiting distance under 1.2m. Unprotected mechanical and glazed openings on the 1st and 2nd floors are permitted on the zero side at a limiting distance of 1.2m or more. Glazed openings follow 9.10.15 and Table 9.10.15.4. On the easement side with a 1.8m limiting distance, a maximum 7.6% glazed opening area from grade to the uppermost ceiling is allowed. If the limiting distance on the easement side exceeds 1.8m, glazed openings are calculated per 9.10.15 and Table 9.10.15.4. Individual openings should not exceed 3.8% of the exposing face.

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- (Note: If any floor in a building isn't sprinklered and fire department response takes over 10 minutes in 10% or more of calls, then use half the actual limiting distance to meet the requirements of glazed openings in 9.10.15 and table 9.10.15.4).
- 8. Electrical penetrations on the zero limiting distance wall require outlet boxes tested and listed for installation or protected by a listed fire stop system. Outlet boxes on walls with a 1.8m limiting distance do not require protection.
- 9. No combustible services are permitted within walls at zero limiting distance.
- 10. Decorative combustible architectural returns on both side walls must cover no more than 2% of the entire exposing building face or extend no more than 0.6 m from any corner onto the side walls. Combustible cladding architectural returns must be installed over a minimum 15.9mm (5/8") Type X gypsum sheathing or equivalent and treated with a fire-retardant coating approved by the Authority Having Jurisdiction.

**Objective and Functional Statement Attributions**

OP3 - Protection of Adjacent Buildings or Facilities from Fire.

An objective of this code is to limit the probability that as a result of the design or construction of the building or facility, adjacent buildings or facilities will be exposed to an unacceptable risk of damage due to fire. The risks of damage to adjacent buildings or facilities due to fire addressed in this code are those caused by:

- OP3.1 – fire or explosion impacting areas beyond the building of origin.
- F03 – to retard the effects of fire on areas beyond its point of origin.

**This Variance relies on**

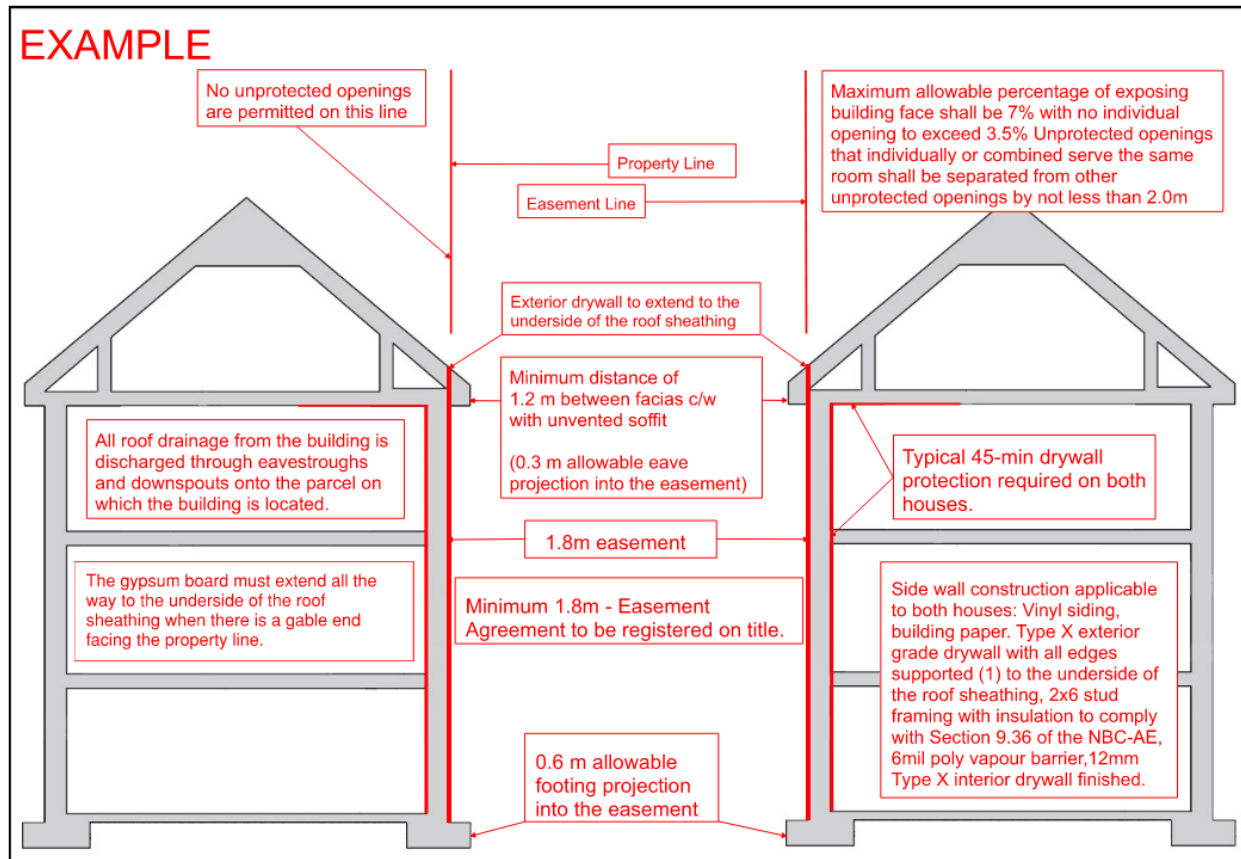
- Mention of this variance within the documents submitted by the applicant for the building permit.
- Inclusion of this variance in the building permit's conditions.
- Full-Scale Study of Spatial Separation; NRC Research Report: IRC-RR-195; dated May 19, 2005.
- NIST Fact Sheet – NIST Laboratory Experiments on House-to-House Fire Spread Simulation



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Address

When cited as (Zero Lot Line Variance DC-129) in the building permit conditions, this variance will apply to the address specified in the building permit.



Sample Detail; The applicant is to provide a detail of both adjacent Zero Lot Line houses, as above, as well as a title block which shall include the company letterhead.



Authority and Conditions

This Variance is issued under Section 38 of the Safety Codes Act, Chapter S-1 of the Statutes of Alberta 2000, with the following conditions:

- The owner/contractor must acknowledge the authority by referencing this Variance (Zero Lot Line Variance DC-129 (ZLL-DC129-PMA-01)) within the Building Permit documentation.

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- The owner and contractor are responsible for ensuring that the project adheres to the requirements specified in this Variance.
- An easement agreement, approved by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (Rocky View County), must be registered on the title of both the parcel and the adjacent parcel, covering a 1.8m width parallel to the property line. The agreement permits a 0.3m eave projection and a 0.6m footing projection across the property line. At all times, a minimum distance of 1.2m must be maintained between any part of the buildings, including eaves, on each parcel.

**Non-compliance with the requirements of this Variance
is an offence under the Safety Codes Act.**

**Additional Information**

National Building Code: 2023 Alberta Edition: <https://nrc-publications.canada.ca/eng/view/object/?id=0316d953-0d55-4311-af69-cad55efec499>

Land Use Bylaw DC-129: <https://www.rockyview.ca/direct-control-bylaws>

**Reference**

Approval Date

- April 2026

Last Review Date

- April 2026