

Understanding the BC Building Code Performance Path: Staying Code Compliant When Using Multiple Wood Exterior Doors

As a wood door manufacturer serving builders and homeowners across British Columbia, we are often asked the same question:

“Can I still use wood doors and meet BC Building Code energy requirements?”

The short answer is **yes** — and in many cases, without limitation — when the project is designed using the **energy efficiency performance path** under the BC Building Code (BCBC).

This article explains how the Performance Path works, why it accommodates wood doors so effectively, and what builders and homeowners should know when planning a compliant project.

Prescriptive vs. Performance: Understanding the Difference

The BC Building Code provides two primary approaches to demonstrating energy efficiency compliance for houses and small buildings:

1. Prescriptive Path

The prescriptive path sets fixed thermal requirements (U-Values) for individual building components — walls, windows, and doors.

While this approach is simple, it can be restrictive. Wood doors, which prioritize durability, craftsmanship, and aesthetics, may not always align neatly with prescriptive U-Value limits — especially when multiple doors are used.

2. Performance Path (Energy Modelling)

The performance path, by contrast, evaluates the entire building as a system. Instead of focusing on each component in isolation, it measures how the overall home performs using energy modelling software, which allows a builder to demonstrate:

The home as a whole meets energy targets, even if certain components — such as wood doors — have lower insulation values.

This holistic approach is where wood doors truly shine.

Why the Performance Path Permits Unlimited Wood Doors

Under the BCBC performance path:

- There is **no hard limit on the number of wood doors**.
- Individual doors are **not required** to meet prescriptive U-Value targets.
- Compliance is achieved when the **total modeled energy use** of the building meets or exceeds code requirements.

In practical terms, this means that wood doors can be used freely — as long as their thermal impact is balanced elsewhere in the building design.

Energy Trade-Offs Are Built In

Energy modeling allows designers to offset higher heat loss in one area with improved performance in another, such as:

- Higher insulation levels in walls or roofs
- Improved window glazing performance
- More efficient HVAC systems
- Better airtightness results

This flexibility is intentional and recognized by the BC Building Code.

What This Means for Homeowners

For homeowners, the performance path means you don't have to choose between:

- Energy efficiency **or**
- The warmth, character, and longevity of wood doors.

You can have both.

✓ You can use more than one wood door — legally and efficiently

Side doors, patio doors, and backyard entries can all be wood, as long as the overall home meets energy targets.

✓ Your home stays energy efficient

Energy advisors ensure your home achieves the required performance level, even with multiple wood doors.

✓ Wood doors bring warmth and long-term value

- They're repairable
- They age beautifully
- They add character and curb appeal
- They withstand heavy, frequent use at high-traffic locations



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What This Means for Builders

For builders, the performance path offers significant design freedom:

✓ **Multiple exterior wood doors are permitted** — even in larger homes.

✓ **Entry doors, patio doors, side doors, and specialty doors can all be wood.**

✓ **Architectural intent is preserved** without sacrificing code compliance.

Many high-performance homes in BC successfully use energy modeling to incorporate natural materials like wood while still achieving excellent energy results.

The key is early coordination with an energy advisor or designer to ensure doors are correctly included in the model.

Why We Support the Performance Path

The BC Building Code was designed to encourage innovation — not restrict it. The performance path reflects this philosophy by allowing builders and homeowners to balance energy efficiency with craftsmanship, durability, and architectural intent.

Wood doors have been part of British Columbia homes for generations. With the performance path, they continue to have a place in the province's most energy-efficient homes — without compromise.

If you are considering wood doors for your next project, speak with your designer, energy advisor, or manufacturer early in the process. The performance path is not a loophole — it's a legitimate, code-recognized pathway that supports better buildings.

Key Take-Aways

- ✓ The **BC Building Code performance path** evaluates whole-building energy performance.
- ✓ It **permits unlimited wood doors** when energy trade-offs are properly modeled.
- ✓ Wood doors are fully compatible with modern, energy-efficient construction.
- ✓ Early coordination with an energy advisor is essential.
- ✓ The performance path protects both **design freedom** and **material choice**

**High energy performance + multiple wood doors
= fully compliant construction.**

Alternative Method for BCBC Compliance

As an **alternative to the performance path**, the BCBC allows builders to remain on the **prescriptive method** by using a specific exemption — **Sentence 9 of BCBC 9.36.2.7** — to maintain compliance without resorting to full energy modelling.

This option preserves design flexibility while avoiding the added cost and complexity of a performance-path energy model.

Read our article '*Understanding the BCBC Prescriptive Path; Energy-Efficiency Requirements & Exemptions*' to learn more.

Our Commitment as a Door Manufacturer

We've built our reputation on delivering doors that balance beauty, durability, and regulatory compliance. The BCBC performance path aligns perfectly with our long-standing belief that a door must do more than simply insulate — it must welcome, protect, and endure.

Whether you're a builder navigating code requirements or a homeowner selecting the front door that will define your home's character, we're here to help you make informed, confident decisions.



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