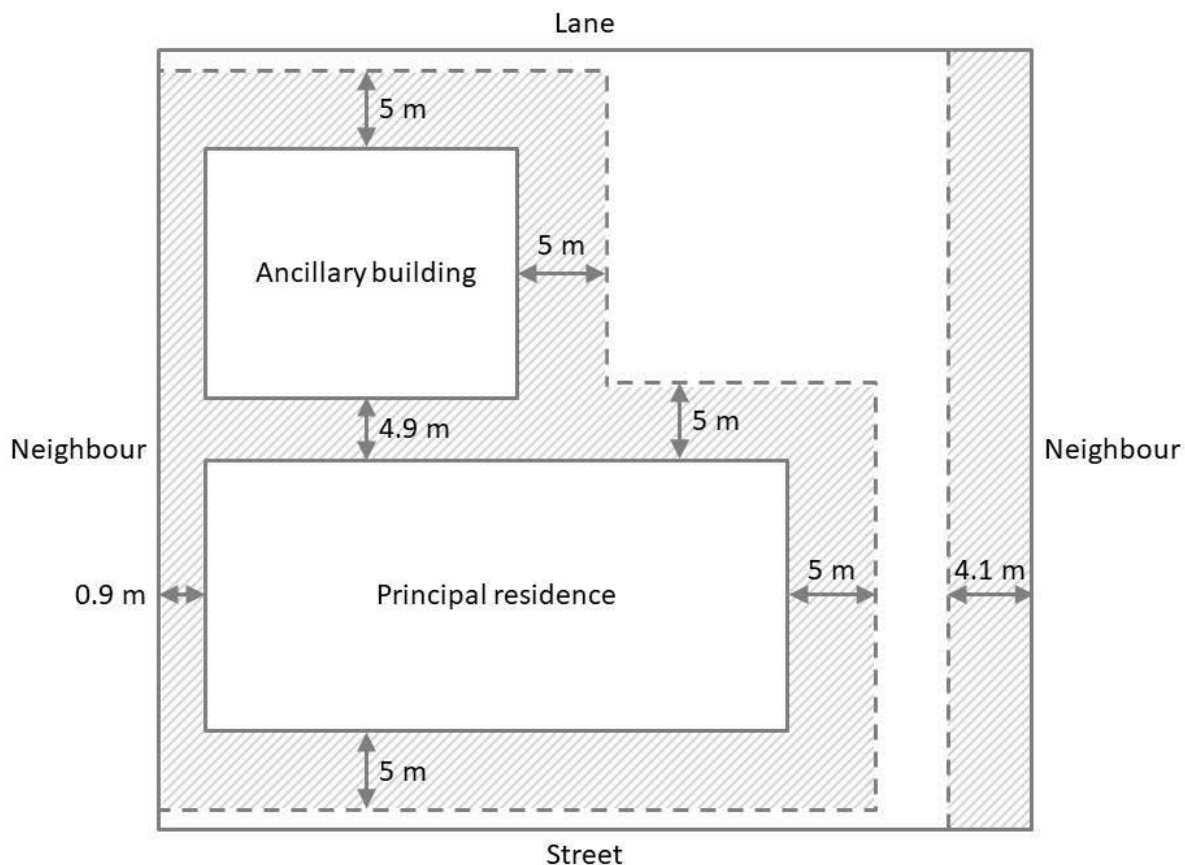


Siting Requirements for On-Site Infiltration Systems

This Bulletin is to clarify legal requirements for the placement of proposed rainwater infiltration systems on development lots. This Bulletin supersedes Bulletin 2000-006-BU/PL.

The intent of Vancouver Building By-law (VBBL) Book I, 9.14.5.3.(2) is to limit harm to persons and damage to buildings from excessive moisture loading on foundation walls, basement floors and the soil immediately beneath footings.¹

The following schematic illustrates minimum setbacks for on-site infiltration systems from buildings and neighbouring properties. Setbacks from the street, lane and utilities infrastructure are at the discretion of the City Engineer. While other pertinent minimum separations are shown, this Bulletin is not a comprehensive summary of all potentially applicable regulations.²



¹ National Research Council Canada, National Building Code 2015 - Intent Statements, Sentence 9.14.5.3.(2).

² Regulatory references:

- 5.0 m (setback from the *building foundation*) - VBBL Book I, 9.14.5.3.(2).
- 0.9 m (firefighters' access to an *ancillary residential building*) - VBBL Book I, 9.10.20.3.(3)(c).
- 4.9 m (laneway home and principal residence separation) - Zoning and Development By-law, Section 11.17.

The minimum setbacks apply to any system to which water is directed for infiltration, such as infiltration trenches, swales and basins; rain gardens; rock and soak-away pits; and proprietary modular units designed for subsurface infiltration. The setbacks do not apply to landscaping. Certain ancillary buildings need not conform to the drainage requirements of VBBL Book I, Section 9.14 when VBBL Book I, 9.35.3.3.(1) applies.

An overflow is required for infiltration systems.

Professionals should be consulted when infiltration constraints exist such as contaminated soils, unstable soils, peat, shallow bedrock or cemented layers in soils, steep slopes, a high water table, a land use with a groundwater pollution risk, a nearby drinking water well, or an area of protected habitat. For drainage requirements near retaining walls, the EGBC “Retaining Wall Design” Professional Practice Guideline should be consulted.

Related City of Vancouver Bulletins include “Lot Drainage Requirements for New Homes” (2000-001-BU/PL) and “Separation of Roof Drainage and Foundation Drains” (2000-058-PL).

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