



New Castle County Government Center  
87 Reads Way  
New Castle, DE 19720  
Department of Land Use - Building Inspections

Date: **February 16, 2010**

Subject: **Fire separation between attached garages and dwelling units**

References: **2006 International Residential Code  
2007 Supplement to the International Codes  
Chapter 6 Buildings and Structures**

This Staff Code Interpretation is intended to be used to clarify Section 309.2 (Separation required) in the above referenced Code Editions. It should be noted that New Castle County amended the above section in Chapter 6.

Below is the exact text from Chapter 6. Note that it states that Section 309.2 is amended by deleting it in its entirety and substitute's new text.

***Section R309.2, Separation required, is amended by deleting the subsection in its entirety and substituting the following:***

***Section R309.2, Separation required. Garages attached side by side to rooms shall be completely separated from the adjacent living space and the attic areas by means of 1/2-inch gypsum board or equivalent material applied to the garage side of the framing. All interior walls, supports and the ceiling in garages below habitable living space shall have at the minimum a one-hour fire rating (e.g., two (2) layers of 5/8ths inch Type X Gypsum or equivalent material). Concrete-filled steel lolly columns used in the structure supporting the separation shall not require a gypsum board application.***

**NCC Stance:** It is the intent of this section to allow 1/2 inch gypsum to be applied to the garage side of the walls and the attic areas when the living space is located adjacent to the garage. When there is habitable space located above the garage, the section states ALL interior walls, supports and the ceiling shall be separated from the garage by a one

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hour fire-rating. This can be accomplished using 2 layers of 5/8<sup>th</sup>'s Type X Gypsum or equivalent material attached to the garage side of the framing. The entire ceiling shall have 2 layers of 5/8<sup>th</sup>'s Type X Gypsum attached to the framing regardless of the amount of living space above. All walls and beams supporting the living space above shall be provided with a one hour rating. This includes the columns that support the beams. All interior walls adjacent to living space shall be provided with a one hour rating. Only concrete filled steel lolly columns are not required to be covered with a gypsum board application.

Openings from a private garage into any room used for sleeping purposes shall NOT be permitted in any situation. Other openings between the garage and residence shall be equipped with solid wood doors not less than 1 3/8 inches in thickness, solid or honeycomb steel doors not less than 1 3/8 in thickness, or 20-minute fire-rated doors.

Ducts in the garage and ducts penetrating the walls or ceilings separating the dwelling from the garage shall constructed of minimum 26 gage sheet metal or other approved material and shall have no openings into the garage.

Any other penetration through the separation required by this section shall be sealed with an approved material to resist the free passage of flame and products of combustion. This sealing material shall not be required to meet the ASTM E 136 requirements.

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George O. Haggerty  
Code Official