



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

Date: **February 27, 2009**
Subject: **Appliances in attics**
References: **2006 International Mechanical Code**

This Staff Code Interpretation is intended to be used to clarify Sections 306.3 of the International Mechanical Code.

Below is the exact text from the sections of the codes in question:

Section 306.3, Appliances in attics. Attics containing appliances requiring access shall be provided with an opening and unobstructed passageway large enough to allow removal of the largest appliance. The passageway shall not be less than 30 inches high and 22 inches wide and not more than 20 feet in length measured along the centerline of the passageway from the opening to the appliance. The passageway shall have continuous solid flooring not less than 24 inches wide. A level service space not less than 30 inches deep and 30 inches wide shall be present at the front or service side of the appliance. The clear access opening dimensions shall be a minimum of 20 inches by 30 inches, where such dimensions are large enough to allow removal of the largest appliance.

Exceptions:

- 1. The passageway and level service space are not required where the appliance is capable of being serviced and removed through the required opening.***
- 2. Where the passageway is unobstructed and not less than 6 feet high and 22 inches wide for its entire length, the passageway shall be not greater than 50 feet in length.***

Question: Is the level service space in an attic subject to similar required "unobstructed" requirements as the passageway leading to the work space?

STAFF CODE INTERPRETATION

Answer: Admittedly, the term “unobstructed” appears in the conditional provisions for the passageway leading to the appliance. However, as the 2009 IMC Commentary denotes “...The intent of Section 306.3 is to require a suitable access opening, passageway and work space that will allow reasonable easy access without endangering the service person...” In our opinion, not only should the passageway be unobstructed, but so should the level service space.

NCC Stance: The required service passageway and level service space are required to be unobstructed.

Code Updates: The requirements of this section are unchanged with the adoption of the 2015 IMC.

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Code Official