

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, POABC

File No: 12-0022

INTERPRETATION

Page 1 of 2

Interpretation Date:	March 18, 2014
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2012
Subject:	Loadbearing Wall
Keywords:	Loadbearing wall, fire separation, fire-resistance rating, fire-rated assembly, fire stop, fire block
Building Code Reference(s):	3.1.7.5., 3.1.9.; 3.1.11.

Question:

A wood floor assembly acting as a fire separation with a fire-resistance rating is supported by wood-framed loadbearing walls having the same fire-resistance rating.

1. Should all penetrations of the loadbearing walls, such as ducts, pipes, wiring, etc. be fire stopped?
2. Should all openings of the loadbearing walls, such as electrical panels, doors and windows be protected with rated closures?

Interpretation:

1. Yes

If a floor or roof assembly is required to have a fire-resistance rating all loadbearing walls, columns and arches supporting such floor or roof assembly shall have a fire-resistance rating not less than that required for the supported floor or roof assembly as per Sentence 3.1.7.5.(1).

Sentence 3.1.9.1.(1) requires all penetrations of a fire separation or a membrane forming part of an assembly required to have a fire-resistance rating be sealed by a fire stop, cast in place or tightly fitted.

Since the wood-framed loadbearing wall relies on the drywall membrane to achieve the required fire-resistance rating all penetrations of such a membrane shall be fire-stopped in order to achieve the required fire-resistance rating unless they are specifically exempted in Subsection 3.1.9.



R. J. Light, Committee Chair

The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee with members representing AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, and POABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. The purpose of the committee is to encourage uniform province wide interpretation of the BC Building Code. These views should not be considered as the official interpretation of legislated requirements based on the BC Building Code, as final responsibility for an interpretation rests with the local *Authority Having Jurisdiction*. The views of the joint committee should not be construed as legal advice.

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, POABC

File No: 12-0022

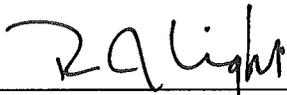
INTERPRETATION

Page 2 of 2

2. No

Assemblies required to having a fire-resistance rating, such as loadbearing walls, columns and arches only have to “withstand the passage of flame and the transmission of heat for the required time when exposed to fire” They are not fire separations acting as barriers against the spread of fire.

Since the loadbearing wall is not required to act as fire separation, opening such as doors, windows, vents, electrical and communication panels, are not required to be protected with fire-rated closures as long as the fire-resistance rating of the loadbearing wall is not affected. In some situations, such as around windows and doors, it is appropriate to use fire blocks as per Subsection 3.1.11. to maintain the integrity of the fire-resistance rating.



R. J. Light, Committee Chair

The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee with members representing AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, and POABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. The purpose of the committee is to encourage uniform province wide interpretation of the BC Building Code. These views should not be considered as the official interpretation of legislated requirements based on the BC Building Code, as final responsibility for an interpretation rests with the local *Authority Having Jurisdiction*. The views of the joint committee should not be construed as legal advice.