

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 12-0117

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date: May 15, 2018

Building Code Edition: BC Building Code 2012

Subject: Fire Blocking at Bulkhead to Ceiling Space

Keywords: Fire blocking, horizontal concealed spaces

Building Code Reference(s): 9.10.16.1.(2)(a)

Question:

Is a horizontal concealed space formed by a dropped bulkhead required to be fire blocked from a horizontal concealed space between floor joists, roof joists or roof trusses which are located directly above the bulkhead?

Interpretation:

No

Clause 9.10.16.1.(2)(a) requires that horizontal concealed spaces in attics, roof spaces, floors and crawl spaces be separated by fire blocks from one horizontal concealed space to another.

The dropped bulkhead is considered to be part of the same horizontal concealed space as the attic, roof spaces, floors and crawl spaces. So, fire blocking is not required to separate the dropped bulkhead from these concealed spaces.

It should be noted that it is not the intent that all horizontal concealed spaces be fire blocked from one another. Attached on Page 2 is an excerpt from NRC for the August 1993 Second Series of Proposed Changes to the 1990 National Building Code of Canada. The reason for this proposed change was to clarify that all vertical concealed spaces must be separated from all horizontal concealed spaces, but that only "**certain**" horizontal concealed spaces must be separated from other horizontal concealed spaces (e.g. the horizontal concealed space between floor joists must be separated from an adjacent attic space over lower storeys).

Attached on Page 3 is an excerpt from the 2014 User's Guide for Part 9 which indicates a furred down drywall ceiling with a gap between the underside of the floor joists and the top surface of the drywall ceiling. This gap interconnects the adjacent joist spaces, similar to a dropped bulkhead.



R. J. Light, Committee Chair

The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee with members representing AIBC, EGBC and BOABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. The Building and Safety Standards Branch, Province of BC and the City of Vancouver participate in the committee's proceedings with respect to interpretations of the BC Building Code. 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.

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Excerpt from NRC for the August 1993 Second Series of Proposed Changes to the 1990
National Building Code of Canada

EXISTING REQUIREMENT

9.10.15.1. Required Fire Stops in Concealed Spaces

(1) Concealed spaces in interior walls, ceilings and crawl spaces shall be separated by fire stops from concealed spaces in exterior walls and attic or roof spaces.

PROPOSED CHANGE

Delete Sentence 9.10.15.1.(1) and insert Sentences (1) and (2):

9.10.15.1. Required Fire Stops in Concealed Spaces

(1) Vertical concealed spaces in

(a) interior walls, and

(b) exterior walls

shall be separated one from the other and separated from horizontal concealed spaces by fire stops.

(2) Horizontal concealed spaces in

(a) attics,

(b) roof spaces,

(c) ceilings,

(d) floors, and

(e) crawl spaces

shall be separated one from the other and separated from vertical concealed spaces by fire stops.

REASON

The present wording does not clearly state the intent of separating, by fire stops, vertical spaces (walls) from horizontal spaces (attics, ceilings, floors, crawl spaces), or of separating certain horizontal spaces from other horizontal spaces (floors from attics over lower storeys).


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Excerpt from the 2014 NBC User's Guide for Part 9

Fire Protection

9.10.

Furring or strapping can also create spaces that allow fire spread. These should also be blocked off at each floor level and at the ceiling level if the ceiling membrane provides part of the required fire resistance (Figure 9.10.-38). Since furring can be installed either horizontally or vertically, both the horizontal and vertical spacing of fire blocks is limited (20 and 3 m (65 ft. 7 in. and 10 ft., respectively)).

9.10.16.3. Fire Block Materials

This Article sets the requirements for the construction of fire blocks, including acceptable materials capable of resisting the spread of fire within a concealed space for sufficient time to permit the safe evacuation of the occupants, and to allow firefighting to commence before significant damage has occurred.

Materials for fire blocking include 0.38 mm (28 gauge) sheet steel, 12.7 mm (½ in.) gypsum wallboard, 12.5 mm (½ in.) plywood, oriented strandboard or waferboard, two layers of 19 mm (¾ in.) lumber with staggered joints, or 38 mm (1 ½ in. nominal) lumber.

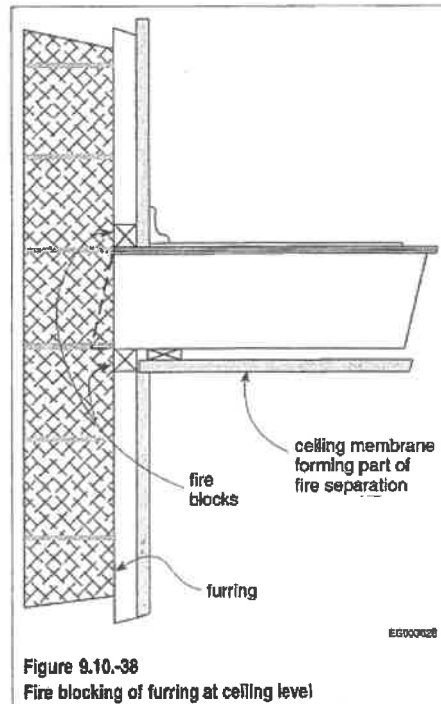


Figure 9.10.-38
Fire blocking of furring at ceiling level


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