



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

Date: **February 2, 2012**
Subject: **Fireplaces**
References: **2009 International Energy Conservation Code**

This Staff Code Interpretation is intended to be used to clarify Section 402.4.3 (Fireplaces) in the above referenced Code Edition.

Below is the exact text from the section of the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code in question.

Section 402.4.3, Fireplaces. New wood-burning fireplaces shall have gasketed doors and outdoor combustion air

This section has prompted several questions all of which will be listed and answered separately below.

Question 1: Are all site-built masonry fireplaces, factory-built inserts, and free standing wood/pellet stoves required to have gasketed doors and outside combustion air?

Answer: This section applies to all new wood-burning fireplaces regardless of whether they are factory or site built. However, this section does not apply to solid fuel-burning appliances that are not fireplaces, such as wood burning stoves or pellet stoves.

Question 2: If a listed and labeled factory-built insert does not have gasketed doors, are they required to be added?

Answer: Not all factory-built fire places are tested for use with doors, therefore, in some cases, installing doors on the fireplace would violate the unit's listing and could create a fire hazard. The manufacturers' instructions for factory-built fireplaces should be followed and such instructions could prohibit the installation of doors. Where approved by the code official, an alternative to doors could be used to meet the intent of the code. Such alternatives include tight-fitting flue dampers and closeable chimney caps.

NCC Stance: With an official Code Modification, New Castle County will accept an alternate method (tight fitting flue dampers, closeable chimney caps, or the like) of limiting air leakage associated with a fireplace.

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Question 3: If a listed and labeled factory-built insert does not have a provision to bring the required outside combustion air into the fireplace chamber, can combustion air be supplied directly from the dwelling unit.

Answer: If a factory-built fireplace is not listed for having outdoor combustion air directly into the firebox, then any modification to the firebox to provide this air would violate the listing.

NCC Stance: With an official Code Modification, New Castle County will accept an alternate system of providing combustion air.

Code Updates: This section has been changed and relocated with the adoption of the 2015 IECC. The new section is 402.4.2 and the requirement for gasketed doors has been replaced with a requirement for a tight-fitting flue damper.

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Code Official