



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

Date: **January 8, 2007**
Subject: **Parapet required**
References: **2003 International Residential Code**

This Staff Code Interpretation is intended to be used to clarify Section R317.2.2 (Item 2) of the International Residential Code.

Below is the exact text from the section of the code in question:

Section 317.2.2, Parapets. Parapets constructed in accordance with Section R317.2.3 shall be provided for townhouses as an extension of exterior walls or common walls in accordance with the following:

- 1. Where roof surfaces adjacent the the wall or walls are at the same elevation, the parapet shall extend not less than 30 inches above the roof surfaces.***
- 2. Where roof surfaces adjacent to the wall or walls are at different elevations and the higher roof is not more than 30 inches above the lower roof, he parapet shall extend not less than 30 inches above the lower roof surface.***

Exception: A parapet is not required in the two cases above when the roof is covered with a minimum class C roof covering, and the roof decking or sheathing is of noncombustible materials or approved fire-retardant-treated wood for a distance of 4 feet on each side of the wall or walls, or one layer of 5/8-inch Type X gypsum board is installed directly beneath the roof decking or sheathing for a distance of 4 feet on each side of the wall or walls.

Question: Does this section of the code allow for the non-combustible roof decking, sheathing, or approved fire-retardant treated wood to be overlapped over the rated wall assembly; thereby leaving less than the 48" exposed on each side of the rated wall?

STAFF CODE INTERPRETATION

Answer: The exception to Section R317.2.2 calls for the 'protective' roof assembly for a distance of 4 feet away from BOTH sides of the rated wall or walls, with no reduction in horizontal distance; this holds for any elevation difference of zero to 30 inches between roof lines. There would be no advantage to lapping the roofing composition onto the vertical wall for a measurable distance, which is already rated. The roof-wall intersect must be tight and sealed to maintain protective separation.

NCC Stance: When installed in lieu of a parapet wall, the protection must extend 4 feet on either side of the wall or walls.

Code Updates: The section in question is unchanged with the adoption of the 2015 IRC, however, it has now been relocated to R302.2.2.

George O. Haggerty
Code Official