



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

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Date: **October 2, 2008**  
Subject: **Fireblocking**  
References: **2003 International Residential Code**

This Staff Code Interpretation is intended to be used to clarify Section R602.8 (Fireblocking required) of the International Residential Code.

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

***Section R602.8, Fireblocking required. Fireblocking shall be provided to cut off all concealed draft openings (both vertical and horizontal) and to form an effective fire barrier between stories, and between a top story and the roof space. Fireblocking shall be provided in wood-frame construction in the following locations.***

***1. In concealed spaces of stud walls and partitions, including furred spaces and parallel rows of studs or staggered studs; as follows:***

***1.1. Vertically at the ceiling and floor levels.***

***1.2. Horizontally at intervals not exceeding 10 feet.***

***2. At all interconnections between concealed vertical and horizontal spaces such as occur at soffits, drop ceilings, and cove ceilings.***

***3. In concealed spaces between stair stringers at the top and bottom of the run. Enclosed spaces under stairs shall comply with section R311.2.2.***

***4. At openings around vents, pipes, and ducts at ceiling and floor level, with an approved material to resist the free passage of flame and products of combustion.***

***5. For the fireblocking of chimneys and fireplaces, see section R1001.16.***

***6. Fireblocking of cornices of a two-family dwelling is required at the line of dwelling unit separation.***

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**STAFF CODE INTERPRETATION**

**Question:** In a situation where there is a 2 story open foyer or 2 story open family room, is any fireblocking required in the stud cavity at intervals of 10 feet vertical? There is no floor attached to the wall in these places, but it is a 2 story house. The code says it is only required at floor and ceiling levels and the commentary shows it being required when the floor is attached to the wall.

**Answer:** In our opinion, the intent of Section R602.8 of the 2003 International Residential code is that, even if the 2 story tall wall you describe does not actually intersect the intermediate floor, fireblocking should be installed in line with the intermediate floor level.

**NCC Stance:** Fireblocking shall be installed at the floor and ceiling levels of all walls and at a maximum of 10 feet vertically.

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**Code Updates:** With the adoption of the 2015 IRC, the requirements of this section have been relocated and are now found in Section R302.11. This code opinion remains valid

George O. Haggerty  
Code Official