



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

Date: **March 10, 2010**
Subject: **Opening protection requirements in rated walls**
References: **2006 International Building Code**

This Staff Code Interpretation is intended to be used to clarify Tables 601, 715.4, and 715.5 in the above referenced Code Edition.

Question: Table 601 requires Type IIIB construction to have 2 hour rated exterior bearing walls. The fire separation distance for all exterior walls is greater than 30". Does that in turn mean that the openings in those rated exterior walls have to be rated in accordance with Table 715.4 and Table 715.5?

Answer: No, although not clearly indicated in the code, when an interior or exterior bearing wall is fire-resistance rated solely because of the building's Type of Construction (i.e., per Table 601), wall openings are not required to be protected and ducts are not required to have fire dampers. For example, an interior bearing wall in a Type VA building which is 1-hour fire-resistance rated only because of Type of Construction (that is, not rated for other separation purposes) the wall is allowed to have cased openings with no doors or windows whatsoever. However, unprotected wall openings or duct penetrations should be finished with casing trim, gypsum board, sealant, etc.

Code Updates: This Code Opinion is unaffected by the adoption of the 2015 IBC.

George O. Haggerty
Code Official

STAFF CODE INTERPRETATION