



# THE CODE ADVISOR

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*Professional Assistance in the Building Codes for  
Architects, Engineers & Code Officials*

## Question of the Month

From the "Quick Code Answers"  
Telephone Support records.

**Quick Code Answers** is an annual subscription service that provides Phone & On-site technical support for your Building Code questions.

### Call us to subscribe!

**Q:** We have a residential attached garage with no habitable space above. The designer is proposing wallboard on the separating wall up to the ceiling and on the garage ceiling to comply with **IRC309.2** (Separation required). Do the other garage walls require wallboard to protect the supporting structure of the ceiling, even if there is no habitable space above?

**A:** There are two scenarios described in this IRC code section. The first involves a fire separation between an attached garage and the residence and its attic. The second situation addresses a habitable room above the garage. There is similar wording for non-residential applications at **IBC 406.1.4**.



In this case, the garage walls must have wallboard because they support a required horizontal separation. The attic over the garage is essentially part of the residence, since there is no wallboard separation above the garage ceiling. It is also important to note that any wood or steel columns that support the garage ceiling must also be protected with 1/2 inch wallboard. The option is to extend the wallboard to the roof sheathing on the separating wall. This would isolate the dwelling attic from the

## Client Highlight

Springettsbury Township  
1501 Mount Zion Road  
York, PA 17402

garage and satisfy the separation requirement.

The garage/residence separation requires 1/2 inch wallboard protection, on the garage side, from the floor to the bottom of the roof sheathing. Any openings or penetrations of this wall must be treated in a manner prescribed by this code section. That would include a steel or solid core wood door, steel ductwork, etc.

A habitable space above the garage must have a 5/8 inch Type X wall board (or equivalent) applied to the garage ceiling. The support components for this floor/ceiling assembly must also be protected from fire with 1/2 inch wallboard.

## Code Tip

Drinking Fountains will have an exemption in the 2009 IPC. Areas with occupancy loads of 15 or fewer will not require a drinking fountain. This matches the IPC limit for providing separate gender restrooms instead of a unisex toilet room.

*Taken from our Important Changes to the 2009 I-codes Seminar.*



## New Feature!

### Accessibility Corner:

The 2009 IBC will see some accessibility changes but not as many as you would expect. The referenced standard, **ICC/ANSI A117.1**, was due to be updated in 2008 but its review process went long and missed the date for inclusion as a reference in the 2009 IBC. Therefore, the **A117.1-2003** remains the technical reference for constructing accessible features for the next 3 years. That means no new grab bars, height or spacing dimensions!



Since the IBC is responsible for defining where and how many accessible features are required, there will be some changes in these areas. One interesting addition is the requirement for providing Enhanced Reach Range lavatories which have an 11 inch maximum reach depth. This has been in the **A117.1** for years but never required by the IBC. The limited reach depth is generally achieved by mounting the controls on the side of the bowl, or with a motion sensing faucet. Now, any toilet room with 6 or more lavatories must have one that complies with the Enhanced Reach described in **A117.1 section 606.7**.      *Taken from our Important Changes to the 2009 I-codes Seminar.*

## Current Events



The adoption of the 2009 I-codes has been in question for months. But it is now on the home stretch facing its final hurdle on December 3<sup>rd</sup> before the Independent Regulatory Review Commission. It has been debated on several levels for many months (understatement). The major sticking point for most of the players on both sides is the IRC's mandatory inclusion of residential sprinklers in townhouses and one & two family residences.

My reliable sources are betting on a full adoption with a slim possibility that the residential sprinklers are optioned to each municipality.

Please don't put money on this prediction. Anything can happen when lobbyists are involved!

## Recommended Resources

### Accessibility PocketBook: 2009 IBC® and ICC/ANSI A117.1 2003

This handy resource compiles vital accessibility information you need. Accessibility PocketBook contains selected provisions from the 2009 *International Building Code*® (IBC®) and the entire text of ICC/ANSI A117.1-2003: Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities.

It assists in the design, plan review, construction, and inspection of accessible facilities and features by combining the accessibility provisions of the IBC with the technical requirements of the A117.1 standard into a single easy-to-reference resource. It is an ideal tool for the job site as well as an easy-to-use desk reference for the office.

(Soft cover, approximately 310 pages)

Product Id: **4028S09** List Price **\$29.95**



## Approved Code Product Highlight

### Municipal Plan Review Support

Our Commercial Plans Examination process creates a well documented and legally defensible UCC review. We use two separate checklists. The first is a custom tool that focuses on the unique state requirements. The second form is the ICC standard Plan Review Record. The findings are documented in a UCC Review Report which includes a Code Summary for the project and any findings by category.



#### Report Features

The report contains several features that help compensate for weak plan submissions. The Code Summary section outlines all of the code parameters that are necessary to perform a valid review. These include Height and Area, Construction Type, Occupancy Class, Occupancy Load, Etc. Many designs address the major code requirements but are missing certain details. In this case, our reviewer will make an Inspection Note in the report. The reviewer will also note any unusual features or construction methods that the inspector would want to examine more closely.

#### Delivery Package

Once the plans are UCC compliant, we pre-sort, package and label them for easy distribution. There are two or three packages created. A Municipal File Copy, a Required Site Copy and a Designers Reference Copy (if a third set is provided). The Municipal package contains all the review checklists and correspondence to document a valid UCC review.

**Free Offer!** Build your Code Reference Library! Municipalities who send or refer plan review projects to us will receive valuable credits for free ICC Store purchases. The first project of the year will automatically earn one of the "Significant Changes" handbooks. Contact us for details!

## Got Code Questions?



**Do you have a code question that is baffling you?**

Submit your code question to [code\\_question@ApprovedCode.com](mailto:code_question@ApprovedCode.com)

Be sure to include a daytime telephone number in case we need more information.

We will respond to your question by e-mail or phone in a timely manner.

**APPROVED Code Services, Inc.** provides building code support services, training and products to assist design professionals and code officials in the proper application of the building code. Our staff is experienced and fully certified in all areas of the Pennsylvania State Building Code. Information provided in this newsletter is believed to be accurate and appropriate for the situation being presented. All information must be cross checked with a code book for suitability to the application. The local building code official and the appeals board have the final authority for interpreting the code in each jurisdiction.



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