

CHANGE TYPE. Addition

CHANGE SUMMARY. This code addition provides assurance that service and replacement of water heaters can take place without having obstructions interfere with those operations.

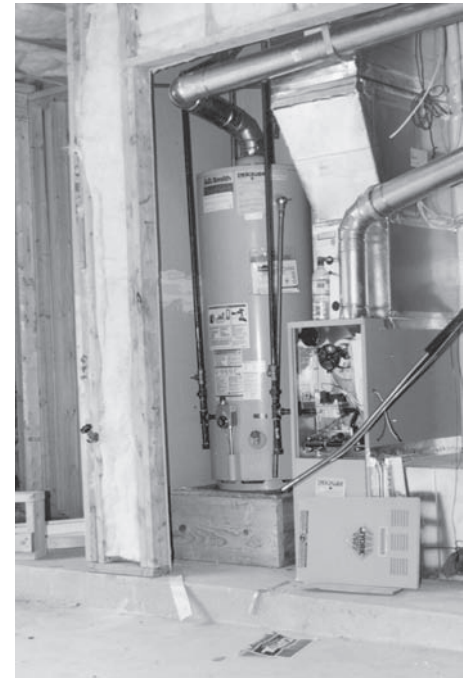
2009 CODE: 502.5 Clearances for Maintenance and Replacement. Appliances shall be provided with access for inspection, service, repair and replacement without disabling the function of a fire-resistance-rated assembly or removing permanent construction, other appliances or any other piping or ducts not connected to the appliance being inspected, serviced, repaired or replaced. A level working space at least 30 inches deep and 30 inches wide (762 mm by 762 mm) shall be provided in front of the control side to service an appliance.

CHANGE SIGNIFICANCE. This practical code change mandating clearances for maintenance and replacement of water heaters was previously approved and incorporated into the International Residential Code at the last code cycle.

The language “a level working space at least 30 inches deep and 30 inches wide (762 mm by 762 mm) shall be provided in front of the control side to service an appliance” is identical to the clearance requirement for water heaters installed in attics. The clearance ensures access without endangering service personnel and ensures that the appliance can be removed for replacement purposes at a later date. It further provides that during replacement a mechanic will not compromise the safety or integrity of a structure by removing necessary supports or fire safety provisions. Other clearance requirements commonly addressing combustibles due to excessive heat are clarified in the manufacturer’s installation instructions.

502.5

Clearances for Maintenance and Replacement



The illustration of an elevated water heater in a garage indicates proper planning during construction for adequate servicing and replacement at a later date. Doors may be added at a later stage of construction and will not be considered as permanent construction if the appliance needs to be replaced later.