

2009 IRC BUILDING AND ENERGY Q&A

Section R302 Fire-resistant Construction

R302.1 Exterior walls. Construction, projections, openings and penetrations of exterior walls of dwellings and accessory buildings shall comply with Table R302.1.

TABLE R302.1
EXTERIOR WALLS

EXTERIOR WALL ELEMENT		MINIMUM FIRE-RESISTANCE RATING	MINIMUM FIRE SEPARATION DISTANCE
Walls	(Fire-resistance rated)	1 hour-tested in accordance with ASTM E 119 or UL 263 with exposure from both sides	< 5 feet
	(Not fire-resistance rated)	0 hours	≥ 5 feet
Projections	(Fire-resistance rated)	1 hour on the underside	≥ 2 feet to 5 feet
	(Not fire-resistance rated)	0 hours	5 feet
Openings in walls	Not allowed	N/A	< 3 feet
	25% maximum of wall area	0 hours	3 feet
	Unlimited	0 hours	5 feet
Penetrations	All	Comply with Section R302.4	< 5 feet
		None required	5 feet

For SI: 1 foot = 304.8 mm.
N/A = Not Applicable.

Q: In our city, there are many very old homes that are located within a few feet of the side lot lines. Quite often we see permit requests for additions off the rear of these dwellings that are in line with the original home. This will usually place the proposed addition just 2 or 3 feet from the lot line. Although the original homes have exterior walls that are a couple of feet from the lot lines, and usually full of windows, our department requires the addition to comply with the exterior wall and opening protection based on location on lot, which typically means one-hour-rated exterior walls and often no window openings. Our position is that the original structure was constructed based on a much older code, or no code at all, but we would like to limit the hazard by complying with the code for the rear addition. Is this a proper enforcement of the provisions in the code?

A: Yes. The code applies to the permitted structure, which in this situation would be the rear addition off the dwelling. It will require fire-resistance-rated exterior wall and opening protection as noted in Section R302.1. See Figure 3-48. [3-48]



CLEARANCE BETWEEN OLDER HOMES
FIGURE 3-48