

602.3 Type III. The Type III building grew out of the necessity to prevent conflagrations in heavily built-up areas where buildings were erected side by side in congested downtown business districts. After the severe conflagrations of years past in Chicago and Baltimore, it became apparent that some control must be made to prevent the spread of fire from one building to another. As a result, the Type III building was defined. The Type III building is, in essence, a wood-frame building (Type V) with fire-resistance-rated noncombustible exterior walls.

Around the turn of the 20th century, and prior to the promulgation of modern building codes, Type III buildings were known as ordinary construction. They later became known in some circles as ordinary masonry construction. However, as stated previously, the intent behind the creation of this type of construction was to prevent the spread of fire from one combustible building to another. Thus, the early requirements for these buildings were for a certain thickness of masonry walls, such as 13 inches (330 mm) of brick for one-story and 17 inches (432 mm) for two-story buildings of bearing-wall construction. Later, the required fire endurance was specified in hours. Thus, any approved noncombustible construction that would successfully pass the standard fire test for the prescribed number of hours was permitted.

In spite of the requirement for noncombustible exterior walls, Type III buildings are considered combustible structures and are either protected (Type IIIA) or unprotected (Type IIIB). Interior building elements are permitted to be either combustible or noncombustible. There is an allowance for the use of fire-retardant-treated wood as a portion of the exterior wall assembly, provided such wall assemblies have a fire-resistance rating of 2 hours or less.