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TO: All Internal and External Stakeholders

FROM: José G. Roig, CBO, Building Official
Development Services Department

DATE: April 2, 2018

SUBJECT: Information Bulletin No. 2018-0001, Austin Interpretation of Type III Exterior Wall Requirements

File: Code Interpretation Manual

As a customer service initiative, the Development Services Department (DSD) has developed this Information Bulletin (IB) in order to describe and clarify the requirements for Type III Construction under the **International Building Code and Austin Amendments**.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY, IBC Chapter 2:

Bearing Wall Structure – A building or other structure in which vertical loads from floors and roofs are primarily supported by walls.

Exterior Wall – A wall, bearing or nonbearing, that is used as an enclosing wall for a building, other than a fire wall, and that has a slope of 60 degrees or greater with the horizontal plane.

Exterior Wall Envelope – A system or assembly of exterior wall components, including exterior wall finish materials, that provides protection of the building structural members, including framing and sheathing materials and conditioned interior space, from the detrimental effects of the exterior environment.

Fire-retardant-treated wood (IBC 2303.2) - any wood product which, when impregnated with chemicals by a pressure process or other means during manufacture, shall have, when tested in accordance with ASMT E84 or UL 723, a listed flame spread index or 25 or less and show no evidence of significant progressive combustion when the test is continued for an additional 20-minute period.

Primary Structural Frame – The primary structural frame shall include all of the following structural members:

1. The columns
2. Structural members having direct connections to the columns, including girders, beams, trusses and spandrels.



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3. Members of the floor construction and roof construction having direct connections to the columns
4. Bracing members that are essential to the vertical stability of the primary structural frame under gravity loading shall be considered part of the primary structural frame whether or not the bracing member carries gravity loads.

Wall, load-bearing – Any wall meeting either of the following classifications:

1. Any metal or wood stud wall that supports more than 100 lbs. per linear ft. of vertical load in addition to its own weight.
2. Any masonry or concrete wall that supports more than 200 lbs. per linear ft. of vertical load in addition to its own weight.

Wall, nonload-bearing – Any wall that is not a load-bearing wall.

Internal Austin definition:

Tested assembly - A fire-resistant rated assembly that has been tested by a credited agency, such as UL or the Gypsum Council.

TYPE III CONDITIONS: Based on IBC 602

IBC 602.3 – Type III. Type III construction is that type of construction in which the exterior walls are of noncombustible materials and the interior building elements are of any material permitted by this code. Fire retardant treated wood framing complying with section 2303.2 shall be permitted **within** exterior wall assemblies of a 2-hr rating or less

Exterior Non-combustible load bearing wall

- Exterior walls shall be 2-hr rated. Must provide tested assembly.
- Any elements penetrating the exterior wall, such as balconies, must be clearly detailed to keep the continuity and integrity of the 2-hr assembly.
- Exterior walls and wall coverings must be made of non-combustible materials.
- Type 3A – any other elements that are part of the primary structural frame must be a minimum 1-h rated but not less than the fire-resistance rating as referenced in Section 704.10.
- Type 3B – primary structural frame is not required to be rated unless required by the fire-resistance rating as referenced in Section 704.10.

Wood structure Exterior load bearing wall



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- Exterior loadbearing walls shall be framed with FRTW, and non-combustible finish from both sides. FRTW must be encased in non-combustible materials.
- Exterior walls shall be 2-hr rated. Must provide tested assembly.
- Structural plans have to reflect that wood is FRTW.
- Any elements penetrating the exterior wall, such as balconies, must be clearly detailed to keep the continuity and integrity of the 2-hr assembly.
- Exterior wall coverings must be made of non-combustible materials.
- Type 3A – any other elements that are part of the primary structural frame must be a minimum 1-h rated but not less than the fire-resistance rating as referenced in Section 704.10.
- Type 3B – primary structural frame is not required to be rated unless required by the fire-resistance rating as referenced in Section 704.10.

Wood Structure with exterior non-load bearing walls

- Must submit an Alternate Method of Compliance (AMOC) documentation, which must be approved prior to submitting the project for building review.
- Must submit documentation from Structural Engineer (signed and sealed) that clearly shows that the exterior walls are non-load bearing and do not support any vertical loads for the building. This documentation shall be reviewed and confirmed by one of the DSD plan review structural engineers.
- Must show location of shear walls, which will be considered part of the primary structural frame based on the IBC Chapter 2 definition for *Primary Structural Frame* “bracing members that are essential to the vertical stability of the primary structural frame under gravity loading shall be considered part of the structural frame whether or not the bracing members carries gravity loads”.
- Walls must be framed with FRTW and non-combustible finish from both sides. FRTW elements must be encased in non-combustible materials.
- Exterior wall coverings must be made of non-combustible materials.
- Type 3A – primary structural frame must be 1-hr rated. If any walls are shear walls, then those walls must be 1-hr rated because they are considered part of the primary structural frame. Columns and beams (part of the primary frame) must be clearly shown to be 1-hr rated and meet the protection requirements of Sections 704.2 and 704.3 OR must meet the dimensional requirements of Section 602.4 for heavy timber. All primary structural frame elements must be 1-hr rated but not less than the fire-resistance rating as referenced in Section 704.10.
- Type 3B – primary structural frame is not required to be rated. Exterior wall is not required to be rated, but still needs to be encased in non-combustible finish from all sides.



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- Type 3B nonbearing exterior walls and partitions located less than 10 ft. of property line – exterior wall required to be 1-hr rated per Table 602.

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