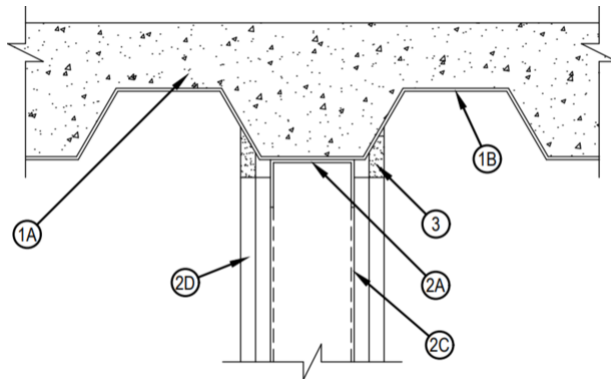




Codes Review Newsletter May 2022



Head-of-Wall Joint Firestop Systems

by David Smith, Plans Examiner

Designs often call for joints or gaps between building components to allow for deflection. When the gap occurs between rated

assemblies, a “weak link” is created that can allow for the passage of fire and products of combustion to spread.

IBC Section 715 requires that the head-of-wall joint be protected by a fire-resistant joint system tested in accordance with ASTM E 1966 or UL 2079. The fire rating of the joint must be the same rating as the wall assembly. Systems are tested and listed by third-party laboratories such as Underwriters Laboratories, Omega Point Laboratories, or Intertek. All information needed to select and install the system is provided in the third-party listing.

The listing contains the listing number, fire-resistance rating, maximum joint size, and its movement capability as a percentage of the joint size. It is very important

that the movement capability of the system is equal to or better than the joint movement specified by the designer.

A common occurrence is a rated wall that meets a non-rated roof assembly. A listing is not available for this. The reason is that ASTM E 1966 mandates the wall and roof assembly used in the test has a fire resistance rating. In these conditions, firestop systems are installed to provide a smoketight seal at the joint.

If there are specific questions about a head-of-wall joint, the manufacturer of the firestopping materials should be contacted for clarification.

Differences in Fire Sprinkler Standards

Our building codes inform designers when a fire sprinkler system is required and the appropriate standard to use. While you are likely aware that there are different fire sprinkler standards, not everyone understands the objectives and trade-offs for each. A helpful summary of the differences between NFPA 13, 13R, and 13D sprinkler systems is available by clicking here: [Sprinkler Standards Summary of Differences](#)



Notice of Plans Submittal Improvements

The State Fire Marshal's Office has recently implemented system upgrades aimed at improving customer experience with Plans Submission Portal uploads and communication. Some technical issues were encountered upon initial launch, but we are now up and running efficiently. Some improvements include:

- A streamlined application form— fewer questions are required to complete the submittal
- A button for multiple building submittals are now provided
- Fee calculations are made when filling out the form. If the status changes from a no review request to a plans review, the fee adjustment is calculated automatically.

Customer service is very important to us and we invite your feedback. Send it to fire.prevention@tn.gov.

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