

ICC TRI-CHAPTER UNIFORM CODE COMMITTEE (TUCC)



POLICY NUMBER: 16

APPROVAL DATE: September 19, 2024 (Original approval: March 11, 2010)

SUBJECT: Protection Against Decay and Termites of Wood Floor Framing Members with Inadequate Clearance, and Under Floor Ventilation of Crawl Space at Room Addition and/or Remodel and Garage Conversion

This guideline is developed by the Tri-chapter Uniform Code Committee and is intended to enhance regional consistency in application and enforcement of the Building Code. Please verify acceptance of this guideline with your local building department prior to its application.

ISSUE(S):

The code does not address the situation when the crawl space clearance is not sufficient and naturally durable or preservative treated wood is not used in a room addition and/or remodel of an existing structure. This guideline provides an alternative to using naturally durable or preservative treated wood.

The code does not offer an alternative when the minimum underfloor ventilation may not be provided in the raised floor of a garage conversion. This guideline provides an alternative when the minimum underfloor ventilation cannot be met in the garage conversion.

PROPOSED GUIDELINE:

1. In a room addition and/or remodel of an existing structure, where the bottom of wood joists is closer than 18 inches or wood girders are closer than 12 inches to exposed earth, the exposed earth or unexcavated area within the perimeter of the building foundation must be covered with a concrete slab at least three inches in thickness. The minimum under floor ventilation as required by CBC Section 1203.4 or CRC Section R408 shall still be met *.
2. In a garage conversion, where the minimum under floor ventilation as required by CBC Section 1202.4 or CRC Section R408 cannot be provided under the raised floor, Class I vapor retarder shall be placed above the existing concrete slab and voids filled with fiberglass bat insulation. Wood sleepers and sill plates in contact with concrete floor shall be naturally durable or preservative-treated wood.
3. All components required to be accessible, e.g. plumbing cleanouts and electrical junction boxes, must be outside the area of reduced underfloor clearance.

* Note: Reduced ventilation 1/1500 is permitted per exception under CBC Section 1202.4.1.2 and CRC Section R408.2 when ground surface is covered with a Class I vapor retarder material and the required openings are placed to provide cross ventilation of the space. The installation of operable louvers shall not be prohibited.

CODE REFERENCE(S): 2022 CBC & CRC

The 2022 California Building Code (CBC) Section 2304.12.1.1 and 2022 California Residential Code (CRC) Section R317.1 require that where wood joists or the bottom of a wood structural floor without joists are closer than 18 inches, or wood girders are closer than 12 inches to the exposed ground in crawl spaces or unexcavated areas located within the perimeter of the building foundation, the floor assembly (including posts, girders, joists and subfloor) shall be of naturally durable or preservative-treated wood.

CBC Section 1202.4 and CRC Section R408 require that minimum underfloor ventilation be provided in the crawl space.