

ICC TRI-CHAPTER UNIFORM CODE COMMITTEE (TUCC)



POLICY NUMBER: 1

APPROVAL DATE: September 19, 2024, Updated
(Previous Approvals: 2/7/08, 4/14/11, 4/10/14, 11/10/16)

SUBJECT: Party Walls

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):

Section 706.1.1 of the 2022 California Building Code provides for the use of a single fire wall (referred to as a Party Wall) at a property line to separate two buildings.

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the minimum requirements for use of a “party wall” to address the issues of construction, maintenance, removal, access, structural stability and location.

PROPOSED GUIDELINE:

The use of a single party wall at a property line to separate buildings may consider the following:

1. A common wall agreement shall be filed with the property. The agreement shall address questions of maintenance, removal and access. The agreement shall be submitted to the building department for review and shall be determined to be acceptable prior to issuance of the permit that will include the construction of the party wall.
2. The party wall must be constructed and located such that the property line is within the fire-rated assembly that provides the necessary fire rating for the party wall. The plans must show full height wall sections and details at the party wall that clearly show the property line to be located within the fire-rated assembly of the party wall. There shall be no gap between the property line and the fire-rated assembly of the party wall.
3. An engineering evaluation of the structural stability of the fire wall shall be submitted as part of the plan review process to address Section 706.2, Structural Stability, and requirements of the party wall. That section requires the following performance criteria: “Fire walls shall have sufficient structural stability under fire conditions to allow collapse of construction on either side of the fire wall without collapse of the fire wall for the duration of time indicated by the required fire-resistive rating.” The analysis shall contain, as a minimum, the following items:
 - 1) A full description of the structural systems on each side of the party wall,
 - 2) A rational analysis of the collapse modes that are likely to occur during fire conditions, and

- 3) How the structural system layout and design provided will prevent collapse of the party wall.
4. The party wall's location relative to the property line shall be verified by a licensed surveyor prior to its construction.

2022 California Building Code:

706.1.1 Party Walls. Any wall located on a lot line between adjacent buildings, which is used or adapted for joint service between the two buildings, shall be constructed as a fire wall in accordance with Section 706. Party walls shall be constructed without openings and shall create separate buildings

Exemption: Openings in a party wall separating an anchor building and a mall shall be in accordance with Section 402.4.2.2.1