

Construction Industry Communication #28

From: Amit Ghosh, Chief Building Official
Re: Draftstopping and Fire Rated Walls in Line with Tenant Separations In Attics Of Existing Residential Buildings.
Date: August 19, 2025

Requirements: Section 708.4 of the Ohio Building Code requires fire partitions to extend from the top of the foundation or floor/ceiling assembly below to the underside of the floor or roof sheathing, slab or deck above or to the fire-resistance-rated roof/ceiling assembly above. If the fire partitions are not continuous to the sheathing and where constructed of combustible construction, the space between the ceiling and the sheathing shall be fireblocked or draftstopped at the partition line in accordance with Section 708.4.2.

Section 302.3 of the Residential Code of Ohio requires dwelling units to have a fire-resistance rated floor-ceiling or wall assembly separation. Where a wall assembly is used it shall be continuous from the foundation to the underside of the roof sheathing.

Background: Many multi-family buildings constructed prior to 1979 were built without a separation between dwelling units in the attic space. This practice has led to the quick spread of fire within these spaces.

Memorandum: When it is discovered a separation is not provided in attics between dwelling units of existing multi-family buildings or the roof/ceiling assembly does not have a fire-resistance-rating and alterations make it feasible to add a separation wall, then at a minimum a studded wall with one layer of 5/8 inch type "X" drywall applied to the side under renovation shall be added in line with the dwelling unit separation wall. It will be considered feasible if the ceiling is removed to allow a full sheet of drywall into the attic space.

Revised
4/3/2026