

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-12-03

August 11, 2003

The following is offered in response to your request for a formal interpretation of the provisions of the BOCA National Building Code/1996 portion of the 1999 State Building Code as it pertains to the use of combustible materials in buildings of Type 2C construction.

Question 1: Plywood meeting the flame spread requirements of Section 803.2 and Table 803.4 is used as an interior wall finish applied directly to metal studs in a non-rated interior wall in a Type 2C building. The wall is constructed between manufacturing space (Use Group F) and office space (Use Group B) in a nonseparated mixed-use building. The wall does not create a corridor. Is this application code compliant?

Answer 1: The answer to this question depends on whether or not the plywood is a structural component of the wall in question. If the plywood is required for structural reasons (for instance to brace studs in a load-bearing wall), then Section 603.1 and Table 602 do not permit its use within a building of Type 2C construction. If, on the other hand, the plywood is non-structural and used as interior finish only, it would be allowed providing it meets the flame spread requirements of Section 803.4 and meets the requirements for a Class III material as required by Table 803.4 for rooms or enclosed spaces in Use Groups B and F.

Question 2: Can fire-retardant treated wood be used for blocking in metal stud walls for lavatory accessories and to stiffen door jambs in metal stud walls?

Answer 2: Yes. Item 8 of Section 602.4.1 allows the use of combustible nailing or furring strips in non-combustible construction in accordance with Section 804. BOCA formal interpretation number 30/401/84 states "it is the intent of the code to permit the use of combustible nailers and blocking within Types 1 and 2 construction."

Question 3: Can non-fire retardant treated plywood be used for EIFS backer board in lieu of exterior gypsum in areas where needed for the installation of building signage?

Answer 3: Yes, assuming the EIFS manufacturer approves of its use as an integral part of their system. Keep in mind that there is a limitation placed on the amount of combustible wall finish of 10 percent of the exterior wall surface area where the fire separation distance is five feet or less.