

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-13-04

September 1, 2004

The following is offered in response to your letter to me dated August 25, 2004 in which you request a formal interpretation of the provisions of Section M1307.3 of the 2003 International Residential Code portion of the 1999 State Building Code with the 2004 Amendment.

Question 1: In new construction, is it the intent of this section to require that all spark producing devices, such as washers, dryers, boilers, furnaces, electrical outlets, etc. be elevated to 18 inches above the floor in any unfinished basement area connected to a garage, even if the required 5/8 inch gypsum board wall and code-compliant self-closing door is in place?

Answer 1: No. Communications with staff members at ICC and referral to the commentary for the 2000 International Mechanical Code, which contains language similar to the referenced code, have clarified this point. The intent of the code is to apply the 18 inch elevation restriction to the garage itself as well as to any room or space, finished or otherwise, that does not communicate with the living space of the dwelling and that is accessible only from the garage. Thus, there is no requirement to elevate a source of ignition in an unfinished basement that is accessed both from the living space of the dwelling and from the garage when the garage is separated from the dwelling as required by the code.

Question 2: In existing construction, if an appliance that is considered a source of ignition is to be replaced, does the requirement for elevation of the ignition source apply the same as it would for new equipment?

Answer 2: Yes. The installation of replacement equipment is regulated by the code as new work, and as such would be required to comply with the elevation requirements as explained in Answer 1.