

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-19-99

April 6, 1999

Question #1: “Is it the intention of.....Section 702 of the proposed 1999 Connecticut Building Code to provide that the imaginary line between buildings is not required to continue beyond the location where two buildings oppose each other?”

Answer #1: No. The imaginary line to which you refer is mentioned in Section 702.1 within the definition of *Fire separation distance* which is defined as “The distance in feet measured from the building face to the closest *interior lot line*, to the centerline of a street or *public way* or to an imaginary line between two buildings on the same property.” The discontinuance of the imaginary line beyond the location where two buildings oppose each other may result in improper, or lack of, exterior wall fire-resistance ratings, including requirements for the maximum area of exterior wall openings. It is particularly important to consider the continuance of the imaginary line when a fire wall or party wall creates two separate buildings that are attached to one another. If the exterior walls on either side of such a party wall or fire wall are at an angle of less than 180 degrees to each other (ie: not in a straight line), then the two buildings created by the party wall or fire wall would, technically, face each other. It is therefore important to establish the location of the continued imaginary line to determine the requirements for fire-resistance rating of portions of the exterior wall on either side of the party wall or fire wall, to prevent the wrap-around of fire through an unprotected exterior wall or openings therein. Please note, however, that in accordance with the exception to Section 705.1, there would be no requirement for exterior wall fire-resistance ratings or exterior opening limitations or protection if the two buildings in question are on the same lot and where the buildings are such that, if combined into one structure, the resulting building would otherwise comply with the height and area limitations of Section 503.0.

Question #2: “Is it the intention ofSections 702.0 and 705.0 of the proposed 1999 Connecticut Building Code to provide that once two sprinklered buildings (except for Use Group H) on the same lot are greater than 40 feet apart, there are no specific requirements for exterior wall rating or opening protection mandated by those sections?”

Answer #2: Yes, providing the imaginary line is placed mid-way between the two buildings to produce a fire separation distance greater than 20 feet. Table 705.2 states that all Use Groups other than H-1 and H-2 with a fire separation distance greater than 15 feet require no exterior wall fire resistance rating (keep in mind, however, that Table 602 still applies to exterior loadbearing walls, so in other than Construction Types 5B and 2C, there would be a requirement for fire-resistance rating of exterior loadbearing

walls). Table 705.3 places no limit on the maximum area of protected openings in an exterior wall when the fire separation distance is greater than 20 feet (which becomes the controlling distance to satisfy both parts of your question) and Section 705.3.1 goes on to state that in buildings equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system installed in compliance with NFPA 13, the maximum allowable area of unprotected openings in all occupancies shall be the same as the tabulated limitations for protected openings (in this case, no limit). Thus, the required distance between two buildings of other than Use Group H, with NFPA 13 compliant sprinkler systems, is greater than 40 feet with the imaginary line at the mid-point between the buildings, creating fire separation distances of greater than 20 feet, in order for those two buildings to not be required by Section 705 to have exterior wall ratings or opening protectives or limitations.