

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-27-09

December 22, 2009

The following is being offered in response to your letter received October 27, 2009 in which you seek a formal interpretation. This question would apply to Section R309.2, of the 2003 International Residential Code portion of the 2005 State Building Code.

Scenario:

A single family dwelling has a basement area with an overhead vehicle door which has a paved drive leading up to it.

Question 1:

What constitutes a garage?

Answer 1:

A garage is a building or part of a building where the space can accommodate the parking or storage of a motor vehicle and where the floor is sloped to facilitate the movement of liquids towards the main vehicle door or sloped to an approved drain.

Question 2:

The single family residence owner has provided a written statement that the space will not be used as a garage. Are the garage separation requirements of Section R309.2 still applicable?

Answer 2:

The garage separation requirements of Section R309.2 are enforceable when the space is a garage. For a couple of reasons, the code requires a garage to have specific building construction separation requirements. One is to protect the building occupants from a potential garage fire that may be undetected for a length of time before the activation of a detector. Another is the reality that occupants often store a variety of potentially hazardous materials within the same space.