

**SECTION R317  
DWELLING UNIT SEPARATION**

**R317.1 Two-family dwellings.** Dwelling units in two-family dwellings shall be separated from each other by wall and/or floor assemblies having not less than 1-hour fire-resistance rating when tested in accordance with ASTM E 119. Fire-resistance-rated floor-ceiling and wall assemblies shall extend to and be tight against the exterior wall, and wall assemblies shall extend to the underside of the roof sheathing.

**Exception:** A fire resistance rating of 1/2 hour shall be permitted in buildings equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with NEPA 13.

**R317.1.1 Supporting construction.** When floor assemblies are required to be fire-resistance-rated by Section R317.1, the supporting construction of such assemblies shall have an equal or greater fire-resistive rating.

**R317.2 Townhouses.** Each townhouse shall be considered a separate building and shall be separated by fire-resistance-rated wall assemblies meeting the requirements of Section R302 for exterior walls.

**Exception:** A common 2-hour fire-resistance-rated wall is permitted for townhouses if such walls do not contain plumbing or mechanical equipment, ducts or vents in the cavity of the common wall. Electrical installations shall be installed in accordance with Chapters 33 through 42. Penetrations of electrical outlet boxes shall be in accordance with Section R317.3.

**R317.2.1 Continuity.** The common wall for townhouses shall be continuous from the foundation to the underside of the roof sheathing, deck or slab and shall extend the full length of the common wall including walls extending through and separating attached accessory structures.

**R317.2.2 Parapets.** Parapets constructed in accordance with Section R317.2.3 shall be provided for townhouses as an extension of common exterior walls in accordance with the following:

1. Where roof surfaces adjacent to the wall or walls are at the same elevation, the parapet shall extend not less than 30 inches (762 mm) above the roof surfaces.
2. Where roof surfaces adjacent to the wall or walls are at different elevations and the higher roof is not more than 30 inches (762 mm) above the lower roof, the parapet shall extend not less than 30 inches (762 mm) above the lower roof surface.

**Exception:** A parapet is not required in the two cases above when the roof is covered with a minimum class C roof covering, and the roof decking or sheathing is of noncombustible materials or approved fire-retardant-treated wood for a distance of 4 feet (1219 mm) on each side of the wall or walls, or one layer of 5/8-inch (15.9 mm) Type X gypsum board is installed directly beneath the roof decking or sheathing for a distance of 4 feet (1219 mm) on each side of the wall or walls.

3. A parapet is not required where roof surfaces adjacent to the wall or walls are at different elevations and the higher roof is more than 30 inches (762 mm) above the lower roof. The common wall construction from the lower roof to the underside of the higher roof deck shall not have less than a 1-hour fire-resistive rating. The wall shall be rated for exposure from both sides.

**R317.2.3 Parapet construction.** Parapets shall have the same fire-resistance rating as that required for the supporting wall or walls. On any side adjacent to a roof surface, the parapet shall have noncombustible faces for the uppermost 18 inches (457 mm), to include counterflashing and coping materials. Where the roof slopes toward a parapet at slopes greater than two units vertical in 12 units horizontal (16.7-percent slope), the parapet shall extend to the same height as any portion of the roof within a distance of 3 feet (914 mm), but in no case shall the height be less than 30 inches (762 mm).

**R317.2.4 Structural independence.** Each individual townhouse shall be structurally independent.

**Exceptions:**

1. Foundations supporting exterior walls or common walls.
2. Structural roof and wall sheathing from each unit may fasten to the common wall framing.
3. Nonstructural wall coverings.
4. Flashing at termination of roof covering over common wall.
5. Townhouses separated by a common 2-hour fire-resistance-rated wall as provided in Section R317.2.

**R317.3 Rated penetrations.** Penetrations of wall or floor/ceiling assemblies required to be fire-resistance-rated in accordance with Section R317.1 or R317.2 shall be protected in accordance with this section.

**R317.3.1 Through penetrations.** Through penetrations of fire-resistance-rated wall or floor assemblies shall comply with Section R317.3.1.1 or R317.3.1.2.

**Exception:** Where the penetrating items are steel, ferrous or copper pipes or steel conduits, the annular space shall be permitted to be protected as follows:

1. In concrete or masonry wall or floor assemblies where the penetrating item is a maximum 6 inches (152 mm) nominal diameter and the opening is a maximum 144 square inches (92 900 mm<sup>2</sup>), concrete, grout or mortar shall be permitted where installed to the full thickness of the wall or floor assembly or the thickness required to maintain the fire-resistance rating.
2. The material used to fill the annular space shall prevent the passage of flame and hot gases sufficient to ignite cotton waste where subjected to ASTM E 119 time temperature fire conditions under a minimum positive pressure differential of 0.01 inch of water (3 Pa) at the location of the penetration for the time period equivalent to the fire-resistance rating of the construction penetrated.