



DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR
ANDREA J. CABRAL
SECRETARY

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
Department of Fire Services

P.O. Box 1025 ~ State Road

Stow, Massachusetts 01775

(978) 567-3100 Fax: (978) 567-3121

www.mass.gov/dfs



STEPHEN D. COAN
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

MEMORANDUM

To: Heads of Fire Department

From: Stephen D. Coan
State Fire Marshal

Date: April 2, 2014

RE: Floor Protection Requirements

I want to bring to your attention the following building code change under the Residential Code (780 CMR 51) that goes into effect for any permit issued after July 1, 2014. This code change took several years to promulgate, but is designed to ensure firefighter safety and is an area that you should discuss with your building official to ensure compliance.

R501.3 Add new subsection.

R501.3 Fire Protection of Floors. Floor assemblies not using dimension lumber or structural composite lumber equal to or greater than 2-inch nominal dimension, shall be provided with a ½ inch gypsum wallboard membrane, 5/8 inch wood structural panel membrane, or equivalent on the underside of the floor framing member unless required elsewhere in this code to be fire resistance rated.

Exceptions:

1. Other approved floor assemblies demonstrating equivalent fire performance.
2. Floor assemblies located directly over a space protected by an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section P2904, NFPA13D, or other approved equivalent sprinkler system.
3. Floor assemblies located directly over a crawl space not intended for storage or fuel-fired appliances.

4. One room or alcove per story not exceeding 80 square feet, when supported between structural walls.

If you have any questions, please contact the Code Compliance and Enforcement Unit at (978) 567-3375 or in Western, MA (413) 587-3181.