



TOWN OF TRUCKEE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
BUILDING AND SAFETY DIVISION

WUI Soffit and Other Openings

PURPOSE: To provide guidance regarding openings in protected soffits for buildings constructed to Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) code requirements

BACKGROUND:

Section 707A of the California Building Code (CBC) and Section R337.7 of the California Residential Code (CRC) regulate fire resistance of exterior building materials. The requirements are exactly the same in both codes. Both codes regulate roof eaves, open and enclosed with soffit materials, exterior porch ceilings, and undersides of appendages and projections. In general, the code requires these areas to be resistive to fire. CBC section 706A.1 and CRC section 337.6.1 regulate vent openings on the underside of eaves and cornices. They must prevent intrusion of flames and burning embers.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of the code in requiring that the exposed underside of appendages, projections, eaves, and soffits are fire rated is to resist the flame and ember intrusion from an exterior fire. Questions have arisen regarding terminating bathroom exhaust vents and installing recessed can lighting in these areas. The code does not provide specific direction in this regard.

PROCEDURE:

Openings in the exposed underside of appendages, projections, eaves, and soffits shall prevent flame and ember intrusion. The use of approved vents at eaves and soffits remains acceptable. Other openings must be protected with the same degree of protection as the building element. Consider the following examples.

- A one hour fire protected recessed can light is acceptable. The inspector will ask to see the one hour rating. That rating is normally found on the product label.
- Some contractors have framed boxes behind the recessed lights and lined them with 5/8 inch fire rated sheet rock, essentially making this area one hour fire rated and enabling the installation of a non fire protected recessed can light. This is an acceptable practice. Please make sure that joints are taped and floated and wire holes are fire caulked.
- An unprotected opening in these areas for a bathroom exhaust fan is not an acceptable practice.

The Town will consider other installations on a case by case basis. Please submit them to the building official for consideration.