



1. Exterior wall: The 2007 CBC table 602 footnote f allows R-3 exterior walls to be non-rated only if they are 5 feet or greater from the property line. An R-3 exterior wall can still be closer than 5 feet, but it must be of 1 hour rated construction. Also, per section 704.5, "the fire-resistance rating of exterior walls with a fire separation of 5 feet or less shall be rated for exposure to fire from both sides."
2. Openings: Table 704.8 footnote i permits unlimited openings in walls at 5 feet or greater from the property line for R-3. If the wall is at least 3 feet but less than 5 feet from the property line, footnote c allows up to 25% of the wall area to be openings (either "protected" or "unprotected"). If the wall is within 3 feet, no openings are allowed. Footnote j specifically states that no openings are permitted for accessory buildings for Group R-3 if they are less than 3 feet from the property line.
3. Roof construction at less than 5 feet: Roof construction within the 5 foot zone is addressed in section 704.11 which calls for parapets or fire-rated roof construction at exterior fire rated walls, but for R-3 when the exterior wall is between 3 to 5 feet, exception 6 applies. In this case no parapet or special roof construction is required. However, if the wall is less than 3 feet from the property line, the wall must either extend up as a parapet, or terminate at a fire-resistive roof for a distance required in section 704.11.
4. Roof Overhangs: Section 704.2 states that eave projections cannot extend more than one-third of the distance to the property line, nor more than 12 inches from the line where protected openings are required, which is 3 feet for R-3. Therefore the projection of the roof can not be closer than 2 feet from the property line. Projections located within 3 feet of the property line must be 1 hour rated construction per sections 704.2.2. Section 704.2.3 exception allows Type V construction for Group R-3.
5. Garages: Since garages used in conjunction with R-3 buildings are Group U, their exterior walls must be constructed slightly differently if between 3 and 5 feet from the property line. First, table 704.8 footnote c does not apply. Therefore, the new code requires that openings in garage walls so located must be limited to protected (fire rated) openings and are limited to a maximum of 15 % of the wall area. So a 3/4 hour rated door would be required per Table 715.4. Also, since R-3 exceptions do not apply, the eave construction must be non-combustible or 1 hour rated per 704.2.3 and the maximum eave projection is 12 inches per 701.2, which may be different from the R-3 portion of the building. Finally, since 704.11 exception 6 does not apply, the parapet or fire-rated roof construction may be required. However, section 704.11 exception 2 might apply. Exception 2 exempts buildings in which 1000 sq. ft. is not exceeded on any floor.



## EXTERIOR WALL/ FIRE SEPARATION DISTANCE AND ALLOWABLE OPENINGS

**HELP FOR THE HOMEOWNER**  
**LOS ALAMITOS BUILDING AND SAFETY**

*Paul Melby*

Building Official:

7/15/10

Date:

Date: 01/31/08

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