



Cellulose Insulation and Fire Blocking

International Building Codes (IBC)

The IBC establishes fire resistance criteria for a product to be considered as a fire stop in IBC “Section 714 Penetrations” and a fire block in IBC “Section 718.2 Fireblocking Materials”. This is the result of ASTM E119 tests in 1999 and 2002 that exposed cellulose insulation to temperatures exceeding 1600°F to ensure the fire endurance ratings of the walls were met or exceeded when insulated with cellulose insulation. Cellulose insulation installed to a depth of 14.5 inches in a wall cavity, whether dense packed or sprayed, meets the manner and form to remain in place and retard the spread of fire and hot gases.

A partial list of other listed materials recognized by IBC as fireblocking include ½ inch gypsum board, mineral fiber, 2 inch nominal lumber, ¼ inch cement based mill board.

Summary

It is very easy to mislead by stating, “our product is noncombustible (because it melts), but their stuff is combustible so our insulation is “safe” but theirs is a fire hazard.” As you should have just learned, this is a misleading. According to *Building Construction for Fire Suppression Forces*, a publication of the National Fire Services Training Academy: “It is critical to recall that noncombustible does not mean ‘safe’. And it certainly does not mean ‘fireproof’. The concept of fire-resistance goes beyond that of non-combustibility. It refers to the capacity of a material or construction to withstand fire or give protection from it, characterized by its ability to confine a fire.”

Be smart and evaluate the role you want building materials to play in giving your family members the appropriate home environment. If you would like copies of the referenced studies, we would be pleased to provide them. Should you like for us to meet with any local building or fire officials, we'd be pleased to do so.



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