Cellulose Insulation and Fire Stopping

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". Based upon results of ASTM E119 testing, cellulose insulation meets the "through penetration" criteria in 714.4.1 (2). Further electrical outlet boxes can be within 3-1/2 inches on opposite walls in a 2 x 4 wall assembly. Mineral fiber can also be considered in this spacing application.

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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