



Marion County Public Works

Building Inspection Division

5155 Silverton Rd NE

Salem, Oregon 97305

Phone: (503) 588-5147

Fax: (503) 588-7948

Email: Building@co.marion.or.us

Building Inspection

Policy & Procedure

No. 112

P&P 112

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ALTERNATE METHOD FOR THE PROTECTION OF ATTIC ACCESS PULL-DOWN LADDERS IN SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLINGS

Background & Discussion:

Homeowners and builders may install pull-down ladders to provide access to attic spaces in single-family dwellings. Often these pull-down ladders are installed in a garage. The Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) requires that a garage be separated from a residence and its attic space by not less than ½-inch drywall applied to the garage side. When ½-inch drywall is applied to a pull-down ladder it may have a tendency to prevent the ladder from closing completely, failing to adequately seal the attic space from the garage area. In lieu of the ½-inch drywall a builder submitted an application to use as an alternate method/material an intumescent type paint that when exposed to fire will form a protective blanket between the fire and substrate which impedes the propagation of flames and insulates the surface from the heat generated by the fire. The actual separation required by the ORSC is not an actual fire-rated assembly, and the drywall specified by the ORSC is not required to be type X.

Policy:

The use of a tested and listed intumescent type paint installed according to its installation requirements is deemed to meet the requirements of ORSC section R104.11 to be acceptable as an alternative material to ½-inch drywall when applied to a suitable substrate on a pull-down ladder used as an access to attic space above a garage attached to a single family dwelling.