

CHAPTER 6

DUCT SYSTEMS

SECTION 601 GENERAL

601.1 Scope. Duct systems used for the movement of air in air-conditioning, heating, ventilating and exhaust systems shall conform to the provisions of this chapter except as otherwise specified in Chapters 5 and 7.

Exception: Ducts discharging combustible material directly into any combustion chamber shall conform to the requirements of NFPA 82.

[B] 601.2 Air movement in egress elements. Exit access corridors shall not serve as supply, return, exhaust, relief or ventilation air ducts.

Exceptions:

1. Use of a corridor as a source of makeup air for exhaust systems in rooms that open directly onto such corridors, including toilet rooms, bathrooms, dressing rooms, smoking lounges and janitor closets, shall be permitted provided that each such corridor is directly supplied with outdoor air at a rate greater than the rate of makeup air taken from the corridor.
2. Where located within a dwelling unit, the use of corridors for conveying return air shall not be prohibited.
3. Where located within tenant spaces of 1,000 square feet (93 m²) or less in area, utilization of corridors for conveying return air is permitted.

[B] 601.2.1 Corridor ceiling. Use of the space between the corridor ceiling and the floor or roof structure above as a return air plenum is permitted for one or more of the following conditions:

1. The corridor is not required to be of fire-resistance-rated construction;
2. The corridor is separated from the plenum by fire-resistance-rated construction;
3. The air-handling system serving the corridor is shut down upon activation of the air-handling unit smoke detectors required by this code;
4. The air-handling system serving the corridor is shut down upon detection of sprinkler waterflow where the building is equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system; or
5. The space between the corridor ceiling and the floor or roof structure above the corridor is used as a component of an approved engineered smoke control system.

601.3 Contamination prevention. Exhaust ducts under positive pressure, chimneys, and vents shall not extend into or pass through ducts or plenums.

SECTION 602 PLENUMS

602.1 General. Supply, return, exhaust, relief and ventilation air plenums shall be limited to uninhabited crawl spaces, areas above a ceiling or below the floor, attic spaces and mechanical equipment rooms. Plenums shall be limited to one fire area. Fuel-fired appliances shall not be installed within a plenum.

602.2 Construction. Plenum enclosures shall be constructed of materials permitted for the type of construction classification of the building.

The use of gypsum boards to form plenums shall be limited to systems where the air temperatures do not exceed 125°F (52°C) and the building and mechanical system design conditions are such that the gypsum board surface temperature will be maintained above the airstream dew-point temperature. Air plenums formed by gypsum boards shall not be incorporated in air-handling systems utilizing evaporative coolers.

602.2.1 Materials exposed within plenums. Except as required by Sections 602.2.1.1 through 602.2.1.5, materials exposed within plenums shall be noncombustible or shall have a flame spread index of not more than 25 and a smoke-developed index of not more than 50 when tested in accordance with ASTM E 84.

Exceptions:

1. Rigid and flexible ducts and connectors shall conform to Section 603.
2. Duct coverings, linings, tape and connectors shall conform to Sections 603 and 604.
3. This section shall not apply to materials exposed within plenums in one- and two-family dwellings.
4. This section shall not apply to smoke detectors.
5. Combustible materials enclosed in approved gypsum board assemblies or enclosed in materials listed and labeled for such application.

602.2.1.1 Wiring. Combustible electrical or electronic wiring methods and materials, optical fiber cable, and optical fiber raceway exposed within a plenum shall have a peak optical density not greater than 0.50, an average optical density not greater than 0.15, and a flame spread not greater than 5 feet (1524 mm) when tested in accordance with NFPA 262. Only type OFNP (plenum rated nonconductive optical fiber cable) shall be installed in plenum-rated optical fiber raceways. Wiring, cable, and raceways addressed in this section shall be listed and labeled as plenum rated and shall be installed in accordance with ICC *Electrical Code*.

602.2.1.2 Fire sprinkler piping. Plastic fire sprinkler piping exposed within a plenum shall be used only in wet pipe systems and shall have a peak optical density not greater than 0.50, an average optical density not greater than 0.15,

and a flame spread of not greater than 5 feet (1524 mm) when tested in accordance with UL 1887. Piping shall be listed and labeled.

602.2.1.3 Pneumatic tubing. Combustible pneumatic tubing exposed within a plenum shall have a peak optical density not greater than 0.50, an average optical density not greater than 0.15, and a flame spread of not greater than 5 feet (1524 mm) when tested in accordance with UL 1820. Combustible pneumatic tubing shall be listed and labeled.

602.2.1.4 Combustible electrical equipment. Combustible electrical equipment exposed within a plenum shall have a peak rate of heat release not greater than 100 kilowatts, a peak optical density not greater than 0.50 and an average optical density not greater than 0.15 when tested in accordance with UL 2043. Combustible electrical equipment shall be listed and labeled.

602.2.1.5 Foam plastic insulation. Foam plastic insulation used as wall or ceiling finish in plenums shall exhibit a flame spread index of 75 or less and a smoke-developed index of 450 or less when tested in accordance with ASTM E 84 and shall also comply with Section 602.2.1.5.1, 602.2.1.5.2 or 602.2.1.5.3.

602.2.1.5.1 Separation required. The foam plastic insulation shall be separated from the plenum by a thermal barrier complying with Section 2603.4 of the *International Building Code*.

602.2.1.5.2 Approval. The foam plastic insulation shall be approved based on tests conducted in accordance with Section 2603.8 of the *International Building Code*.

602.2.1.5.3 Covering. The foam plastic insulation shall be covered by corrosion-resistant steel having a base metal thickness of not less than 0.0160 inch (0.4 mm).

602.3 Stud cavity and joist space plenums. Stud wall cavities and the spaces between solid floor joists to be utilized as air plenums shall comply with the following conditions:

1. Such cavities or spaces shall not be utilized as a plenum for supply air.
2. Such cavities or spaces shall not be part of a required fire-resistance-rated assembly.
3. Stud wall cavities shall not convey air from more than one floor level.
4. Stud wall cavities and joist space plenums shall comply with the floor penetration protection requirements of the *International Building Code*.
5. Stud wall cavities and joist space plenums shall be isolated from adjacent concealed spaces by approved fireblocking as required in the *International Building Code*.

[B] 602.4 Flood hazard. For structures located in flood hazard areas, plenum spaces shall be located above the design flood elevation or shall be designed and constructed to prevent water from entering or accumulating within the plenum spaces during floods up to the design flood elevation. If the plenum spaces are

located below the design flood elevation, they shall be capable of resisting hydrostatic and hydrodynamic loads and stresses, including the effects of buoyancy, during the occurrence of flooding to the design flood elevation.

**SECTION 603
DUCT CONSTRUCTION AND INSTALLATION**

603.1 General. An air distribution system shall be designed and installed to supply the required distribution of air. The installation of an air distribution system shall not affect the fire protection requirements specified in the *International Building Code*. Ducts shall be constructed, braced, reinforced and installed to provide structural strength and durability. For one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses, supply and return ducts shall be sized according to ACCA Manual D or SMACNA Installation Standards for Residential Heating and Air Conditioning Systems.

603.1.1 Nothing in this section shall be deemed to preclude the use, within a conditioned space, of a fabric air distribution device that combines the function of air transport and air diffusion, provided that the materials used shall have a flame spread/smoke developed rating not greater than 25/50.

603.2 Duct sizing. Ducts installed within a single dwelling unit shall be sized in accordance with ACCA Manual D or other approved methods. Ducts installed within all other buildings shall be sized in accordance with the *ASHRAE Handbook of Fundamentals* or other equivalent computation procedure.

603.3 Duct classification. Ducts shall be classified based on the maximum operating pressure of the duct at pressures of positive or negative 0.5, 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0, 6.0 or 10.0 inches of water column. The pressure classification of ducts shall equal or exceed the design pressure of the air distribution in which the ducts are utilized.

603.4 Metallic ducts. All metallic ducts shall be constructed as specified in the *SMACNA HVAC Duct Construction Standards—Metal and Flexible*.

Exception: Ducts installed within single dwelling units shall have a minimum thickness as specified in Table 603.4.

**TABLE 603.4
DUCT CONSTRUCTION MINIMUM SHEET METAL
THICKNESSES FOR SINGLE DWELLING UNITS**

DUCT SIZE	GALVANIZED		APPROXIMATE ALUMINUM B&S GAGE
	Minimum thickness (inches)	Equivalent Galvanized Gage No.	
Round ducts and enclosed Rectangular ducts			
14" or less	0.013	30	26
Over 14"	0.016	28	24
Exposed rectangular ducts			
14" or less	0.016	28	24
Over 14"	0.019	26	22

For SI: 1 inch = 25.4 mm.

603.5 Nonmetallic ducts. Nonmetallic ducts shall be constructed with Class 0 or Class 1 duct material in accordance with

UL 181. Fibrous duct construction shall conform to the SMACNA *Fibrous Glass Duct Construction Standards* or NAIMA *Fibrous Glass Duct Construction Standards*. The maximum air temperature within nonmetallic ducts shall not exceed 250°F (121°C).

603.5.1 Gypsum ducts. The use of gypsum boards to form air shafts (ducts) shall be limited to return air systems where the air temperatures do not exceed 125°F (52°C) and the gypsum board surface temperature is maintained above the airstream dew-point temperature. Air ducts formed by gypsum boards shall not be incorporated in air-handling systems utilizing evaporative coolers.

603.6 Flexible air ducts and flexible air connectors. Flexible air ducts, both metallic and nonmetallic, shall comply with Sections 603.6.1, 603.6.1.1, 603.6.3 and 603.6.4. Flexible air connectors, both metallic and nonmetallic, shall comply with Sections 606.6.2 through 603.6.4.

603.6.1 Flexible air ducts. Flexible air ducts, both metallic and nonmetallic, shall be tested in accordance with UL 181. Such ducts shall be listed and labeled as Class 0 or Class 1 flexible air ducts and shall be installed in accordance with Section 304.1.

603.6.1.1 Duct length. Flexible air ducts shall not be limited in length.

603.6.2 Flexible air connectors. Flexible air connectors, both metallic and nonmetallic, shall be tested in accordance with UL 181. Such connectors shall be listed and labeled as Class 0 or Class 1 flexible air connectors and shall be installed in accordance with Section 304.1.

603.6.2.1 Connector length. Flexible air connectors shall be limited in length to 14 feet (4267 mm).

603.6.2.2 Connector penetration limitations. Flexible air connectors shall not pass through any wall, floor or ceiling.

603.6.3 Air temperature. The design temperature of air to be conveyed in flexible air ducts and flexible air connectors shall be less than 250°F (121°C).

603.6.4 Flexible air duct and air connector clearance. Flexible air ducts and air connectors shall be installed with a minimum clearance to an appliance as specified in the appliance manufacturer's installation instructions.

603.7 Rigid duct penetrations. Duct system penetrations of walls, floors, ceilings and roofs and air transfer openings in such building components shall be protected as required by Section 607.

603.8 Underground ducts. Ducts shall be approved for underground installation. Metallic ducts not having an approved protective coating shall be completely encased in a minimum of 2 inches (51 mm) of concrete.

603.8.1 Slope. Ducts shall slope to allow drainage to a point provided with access.

603.8.2 Sealing. Ducts shall be sealed and secured prior to pouring the concrete encasement.

603.8.3 Plastic ducts and fittings. Plastic ducts shall be constructed of PVC having a minimum pipe stiffness of 8 psi (55

kPa) at 5-percent deflection when tested in accordance with ASTM D 2412. Plastic duct fittings shall be constructed of either PVC or high-density polyethylene. Plastic duct and fittings shall be utilized in underground installations only. The maximum design temperature for systems utilizing plastic duct and fittings shall be 150°F (66°C).

603.9 Joints, seams and connections. All longitudinal and transverse joints, seams and connections in metallic and non-metallic ducts shall be constructed as specified in SMACNA *HVAC Duct Construction Standards – Metal and Flexible* and NAIMA *Fibrous Glass Duct Construction Standards*. All joints, longitudinal and transverse seams, and connections in ductwork shall be securely fastened and sealed with welds, gaskets, mastics (adhesives), mastic-plus-embedded-fabric systems or tapes. Tapes and mastics used to seal ductwork listed and labeled in accordance with UL 181A shall be marked “181A-P” for pressure-sensitive tape, “181A-M” for mastic or “181A-H” for heat-sensitive tape. Tapes and mastics used to seal flexible air ducts and flexible air connectors shall comply with UL 181B and shall be marked “181B-FX” for pressure-sensitive tape or “181A-M” for mastic. Duct connections to flanges of air distribution system equipment shall be sealed and mechanically fastened. Unlisted duct tape is not permitted as a sealant on any metal ducts.

603.10 Supports. Ducts shall be supported with approved hangers at intervals not exceeding 10 feet (3048 mm) or by other approved duct support systems designed in accordance with the *International Building Code*. Flexible and other factory-made ducts shall be supported in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions.

603.10.1 For one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses. Metal ducts shall be securely supported. Where hung or suspended, metal straps a minimum of 1 inch (25 mm) in width and equivalent to or heavier gauge than the duct being supported shall be used. Straps, when used, shall be at maximum 64-inch (1626 mm) intervals and shall be securely attached to the building structure. Straps shall be attached to the duct at a minimum of two points with screws or rivets. Hanger systems shall comply with this section or other approved means. Nonmetallic or listed duct systems shall be supported in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions. All equipment shall be supported independently of the duct system except when the duct is used as a support base. When used as a support base, the duct shall be of sufficient strength and designed to support the weight of the unit. Listed bases shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions.

603.11 Furnace connections. Ducts connecting to a furnace shall have a clearance to combustibles in accordance with the furnace manufacturer's installation instructions.

603.12 Condensation. Provisions shall be made to prevent the formation of condensation on the exterior of new duct.

[B] 603.13 Flood hazard areas. For structures in flood hazard areas, ducts shall be located above the design flood elevation or shall be designed and constructed to prevent water from entering or accumulating within the ducts during floods up to the design flood elevation. If the ducts are located below the design flood elevation, the ducts shall be capable of resisting hydrostatic and

hydrodynamic loads and stresses, including the effects of buoyancy, during the occurrence of flooding to the design flood elevation.

603.14 Location. Ducts shall not be installed in or within 4 inches (102 mm) of the earth, except where such ducts comply with Section 603.8.

603.15 Mechanical protection. Ducts installed in locations where they are exposed to mechanical damage by vehicles or from other causes shall be protected by approved barriers.

603.16 Weather protection. All ducts including linings, coverings and vibration isolation connectors installed on the exterior of the building shall be adequately protected against the elements.

603.17 Registers, grilles and diffusers. Duct registers, grilles and diffusers shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions. Balancing dampers or other means of supply air adjustment shall be provided in the branch ducts or at each individual duct register, grille or diffuser.

603.17.1 Floor registers. Floor registers shall resist, without structural failure, a 200-pound (90.8 kg) concentrated load on a 2-inch-diameter (51 mm) disc applied to the most critical area of the exposed face.

603.18 Under-floor plenums. An under-floor space used as a supply plenum shall conform to the requirements of this section. Fuel gas lines and plumbing waste cleanouts shall not be located within the space.

603.18.1 General. The space shall be cleaned of loose combustible material and scrap, and shall be tightly closed. The ground surface of the space shall be covered with a moisture barrier having a minimum thickness of 4 mils (0.102 mm).

603.18.2 Materials. The under-floor space, including the sidewall insulation, shall be formed by materials having flame spread ratings not greater than 200.

603.18.3 Furnace connections. A duct shall extend from the furnace supply outlet to not less than 6 inches (153 mm) below the combustible framing. This receptacle shall be installed below the floor opening into the plenum in accordance with the following requirements:

1. The receptacle shall be securely suspended from the floor members and shall not be more than 18 inches (457 mm) below the floor opening.
2. The area of the receptacle shall extend 3 inches (76 mm) beyond the opening on all sides.
3. The perimeter of the receptacle shall have a vertical lip at least 1 inch (25 mm) high at the open sides.

603.18.4 Access. Access to an under-floor plenum shall be provided through an opening in the floor with minimum dimensions of 18 inches by 24 inches (457 mm by 610 mm).

603.18.5 Furnace controls. The furnace shall be equipped with an automatic control that will start the air-circulating fan when the air in the furnace bonnet reaches a temperature not greater than 150°F (66°C). The furnace shall additionally be equipped with an approved automatic control that limits the outlet air temperature to 200°F (93°C).

SECTION 604 INSULATION

604.1 General. Duct insulation shall conform to the requirements of Sections 604.2 through 604.13 and the *International Energy Conservation Code*. Replacement or addition of cooling equipment to existing ductwork located in an attic shall require the ductwork to be insulated. Replacement of heating or the addition of cooling equipment in a crawl space shall not require the existing ductwork to be insulated.

604.2 Surface temperature. Ducts that operate at temperatures exceeding 120°F (49°C) shall have sufficient thermal insulation to limit the exposed surface temperature to 120°F (49°C).

604.3 Coverings and linings. Coverings and linings, including adhesives when used, shall have a flame spread index not more than 25 and a smoke-developed index not more than 50, when tested in accordance with ASTM E 84, using the specimen preparation and mounting procedures of ASTM E 2231. Duct coverings and linings shall not flame, glow, smolder or smoke when tested in accordance with ASTM C 411 at the temperature to which they are exposed in service. The test temperature shall not fall below 250°F (121°C).

604.4 Foam plastic insulation. Foam plastic used as duct coverings and linings shall conform to the requirements of Section 604.

604.5 Appliance insulation. Listed and labeled appliances that are internally insulated shall be considered as conforming to the requirements of Section 604.

604.6 Penetration of assemblies. Duct coverings shall not penetrate a wall or floor required to have a fire-resistance rating or required to be fireblocked.

[EC] 604.7 Identification. External duct insulation and factory-insulated flexible duct shall be legibly printed or identified at intervals not greater than 36 inches (914 mm) with the name of the manufacturer, the thermal resistance *R*-value at the specified installed thickness and the flame spread and smoke-developed indexes of the composite materials. All duct insulation product *R*-values shall be based on insulation only, excluding air films, vapor retarders or other duct components, and shall be based on tested *C*-values at 75°F (24°C) mean temperature at the installed thickness, in accordance with recognized industry procedures. The installed thickness of duct insulation used to determine its *R*-values shall be determined as follows:

1. For duct board, duct liner and factory-made rigid ducts not normally subjected to compression, the nominal insulation thickness shall be used.
2. For duct wrap, the installed thickness shall be assumed to be 75 percent (25-percent compression) of nominal thickness.
3. For factory-made flexible air ducts, the installed thickness shall be determined by dividing the difference between the actual outside diameter and nominal inside diameter by two.

604.8 Lining installation. Linings shall be interrupted at the area of operation of a fire damper and at a minimum of 6 inches (152 mm) upstream of and 6 inches (152 mm) downstream of electric-resistance and fuel-burning heaters in a duct system.

Metal nosings or sleeves shall be installed over exposed duct liner edges that face opposite the direction of airflow.

604.9 Thermal continuity. Where a duct liner has been interrupted, a duct covering of equal thermal performance shall be installed.

Exception: See Section 604.6.

604.10 Service openings. Service openings shall not be concealed by duct coverings unless the exact location of the opening is properly identified.

604.11 Vapor retarders. Where ducts used for cooling are externally insulated, the insulation shall be covered with a vapor retarder having a maximum permeance of 0.05 perm [2.87 ng/(Pa · s · m²)] or aluminum foil having a minimum thickness of 2 mils (0.051 mm). Insulations having a permeance of 0.05 perm [2.87 ng/(P · s · m²)] or less shall not be required to be covered. All joints and seams shall be sealed to maintain the continuity of the vapor retarder.

604.12 Weatherproof barriers. Insulated exterior ducts shall be protected with an approved weatherproof barrier.

604.13 Internal insulation. Materials used as internal insulation and exposed to the airstream in ducts shall be shown to be durable when tested in accordance with UL 181. Exposed internal insulation that is not impermeable to water shall not be used to line ducts or plenums from the exit of a cooling coil to the downstream end of the drain pan.

**SECTION 605
AIR FILTERS**

605.1 General. Heating and air-conditioning systems of the central type shall be provided with approved air filters. Filters shall be installed in the return air system, upstream from any heat exchanger or coil, in an approved convenient location. Liquid adhesive coatings used on filters shall have a flash point not lower than 325°F (163°C).

605.2 Approval. Media-type and electrostatic-type air filters shall be listed and labeled. Media-type air filters shall comply with UL 900. High efficiency particulate air filters shall comply with UL 586. Electrostatic-type air filters shall comply with UL 867. Air filters utilized within dwelling units shall be designed for the intended application and shall not be required to be listed and labeled.

605.3 Airflow over the filter. Ducts shall be constructed to allow an even distribution of air over the entire filter.

**SECTION 606
SMOKE DETECTION SYSTEMS CONTROL**

606.1 Controls required. Air distribution systems shall be equipped with smoke detectors listed and labeled for installation in air distribution systems, as required by this section. Duct

smoke detectors shall comply with UL 268A. Other smoke detectors shall comply with UL 268.

Exception: Dwelling units.

606.2 Where required. Smoke detectors shall be installed where indicated in Sections 606.2.1 through 606.2.3.

Exception: Smoke detectors shall not be required where air distribution systems are incapable of spreading smoke beyond the enclosing walls, floors and ceilings of the room or space in which the smoke is generated.

606.2.1 Return air systems. Smoke detectors shall be installed in return air systems with a design capacity greater than 2,000 cfm (0.9 m³/s), in the return air duct or plenum upstream of any filters, exhaust air connections, outdoor air connections, or decontamination equipment and appliances.

Exception: Smoke detectors are not required in the return air system where all portions of the building served by the air distribution system are protected by area smoke detectors connected to a fire alarm system in accordance with the *International Fire Code*. The area smoke detection system shall comply with Section 606.4.

606.2.2 Common supply and return air systems. Where multiple air-handling systems share common spaces, common supply or return air ducts or plenums with a combined design capacity greater than 2,000 cfm (0.9 m³/s), the return air system shall be provided with smoke detectors in accordance with Section 606.2.1.

Exception: Individual smoke detectors shall not be required for any fan-powered unit serving only one space. Individual smoke detectors shall not be required for each fan-powered terminal unit, provided that such units do not have an individual design capacity greater than 2,000 cfm (0.9 m³/s) and will be shut down by activation of one of the following:

1. Smoke detectors required by Sections 606.2.1 and 606.2.3.
2. An approved area smoke detector system located in the return air plenum serving such units.
3. An area smoke detector system as prescribed in the exception to Section 606.2.1.

In all cases, the smoke detectors shall comply with Sections 606.4 and 606.4.1.

606.2.3 Return air risers. Where return air risers serve two or more stories or are part of a return air system having a design capacity greater than 15,000 cfm (7.1 m³/s), smoke detectors shall be installed at each story. Such smoke detectors shall be located upstream of the connection between the return air riser and any air ducts or plenums.

606.2.4 Fan shutdown by smoke detector. In Groups I-1, I-2, I-3 and R, an air-handling unit serving more than one floor shall be automatically shut down on detection of

smoke by a duct-type detector in the return from each floor level located upstream from connection to the common return.

Exceptions:

1. One- and two-family dwellings, adult and child day care in one- and two-family dwellings, individual apartments, condominiums and townhouses.
2. Smoke detectors are not required in the return air system where the space served by the air distribution system is protected by a system of area smoke detectors in accordance with the North Carolina Building Code. The area smoke detector system shall comply with Section 606.4.

606.3 Installation. Smoke detectors required by this section shall be installed in accordance with NFPA 72. The required smoke detectors shall be installed to monitor the entire airflow conveyed by the system including return air and exhaust or relief air. Access shall be provided to smoke detectors for inspection and maintenance.

606.4 Controls operation. Upon activation, the smoke detectors shall shut down the air distribution system. Air distribution systems that are part of a smoke control system shall switch to the smoke control mode upon activation of a detector.

606.4.1 Supervision. The duct smoke detectors shall be connected to a fire alarm system. The actuation of a duct smoke detector shall activate a visible and audible supervisory signal at a constantly attended location.

Exceptions:

1. The supervisory signal at a constantly attended location is not required where the duct smoke detector activates the building’s alarm-indicating appliances.
2. In occupancies not required to be equipped with a fire alarm system, actuation of a smoke detector shall activate a visible and an audible signal in an approved location. Duct smoke detector trouble conditions shall activate a visible or audible signal in an approved location and shall be identified as air duct detector trouble.

**[B] SECTION 607
DUCTS AND AIR TRANSFER OPENINGS**

607.1 General. The provisions of this section shall govern the protection of duct penetrations and air transfer openings in fire-resistance-rated assemblies.

607.1.1 Ducts and air transfer openings without dampers. Ducts and air transfer openings that penetrate fire-resistance-rated assemblies and are not required to have dampers by this section shall comply with the requirements of Section 712 of the *International Building Code*.

607.2 Installation. Fire dampers, smoke dampers, combination fire/smoke dampers and ceiling dampers located within air distribution and smoke control systems shall be installed in accordance with the requirements of this section, and the manufacturer’s installation instructions and listing.

607.2.1 Smoke control system. Where the installation of a fire damper will interfere with the operation of a required smoke control system in accordance with Section 513, approved alternative protection shall be utilized.

607.2.2 Hazardous exhaust ducts. Fire dampers for hazardous exhaust duct systems shall comply with Section 510.

607.3 Damper testing and ratings. Dampers shall be listed and bear the label of an approved testing agency indicating compliance with the standards in this section. Fire dampers shall comply with the requirements of UL 555. Only fire dampers labeled for use in dynamic systems shall be installed in heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems designed to operate with fans on during a fire. Smoke dampers shall comply with the requirements of UL 555S. Combination fire/smoke dampers shall comply with the requirements of both UL 555 and UL 555S. Ceiling radiation dampers shall comply with the requirements of UL 555C.

607.3.1 Fire protection rating. Fire dampers shall have the minimum fire protection rating specified in Table 607.3.1 for the type of penetration.

**TABLE 607.3.1
FIRE DAMPER RATING**

TYPE OF PENETRATION	MINIMUM DAMPER RATING (hour)
Less than 3-hour fire-resistance-rated assemblies	1½
3-hour or greater fire-resistance-rated assemblies	3

607.3.1.1 Fire damper actuating device. The fire damper actuating device shall meet one of the following requirements:

1. The operating temperature shall be approximately 50°F (27.8°C) above the normal temperature within the duct system, but not less than 160°F (71°C).
2. The operating temperature shall be not more than 286°F (141°C) where located in a smoke control system complying with Section 513.
3. Where a combination fire/smoke damper is located in a smoke control system complying with Section 513, the operating temperature rating shall be approximately 50°F (27.8°C) above the maximum smoke control system designed operating temperature, or a maximum temperature of 350°F (177°C). The temperature shall not exceed the UL 555S degradation test temperature rating for a combination fire/smoke damper.

607.3.2 Smoke damper ratings. Smoke damper leakage ratings shall not be less than Class II. Elevated temperature ratings shall be not less than 250°F (121°C).

607.3.2.1 Smoke damper actuation methods. The smoke damper shall close upon actuation of a listed smoke detector or detectors installed in accordance with Section 607 of this code and Sections 907.10 and 907.11

of the *International Building Code* and one of the following methods, as applicable:

1. Where a damper is installed within a duct, a smoke detector shall be installed in the duct within 5 feet (1524 mm) of the damper with no air outlets or inlets between the detector and the damper. The detector shall be listed for the air velocity, temperature and humidity anticipated at the point where it is installed. Other than in mechanical smoke control systems, dampers shall be closed upon fan shutdown where local smoke detectors require a minimum velocity to operate.
2. Where a damper is installed above smoke barrier doors in a smoke barrier, a spot-type detector listed for releasing service shall be installed on either side of the smoke barrier door opening.
3. Where a damper is installed within an unducted opening in a wall, a spot-type detector listed for releasing service shall be installed within 5 feet (1524 mm) horizontally of the damper.
4. Where a damper is installed in a corridor wall, the damper shall be permitted to be controlled by a smoke detection system installed in the corridor.
5. Where a total-coverage smoke detector system is provided within areas served by an HVAC system, dampers shall be permitted to be controlled by the smoke detection system.

607.4 Access and identification. Fire and smoke dampers shall be provided with an approved means of access, large enough to permit inspection and maintenance of the damper and its operating parts. The access shall not affect the integrity of fire-resistance-rated assemblies. The access openings shall not reduce the fire-resistance rating of the assembly. Access points shall be permanently identified on the exterior by a label having letters not less than 0.5 inch (12.7 mm) in height reading: SMOKE DAMPER or FIRE DAMPER. Access doors in ducts shall be tight fitting and suitable for the required duct construction.

607.5 Location and installation. Fire dampers, smoke dampers, combination fire/smoke dampers and ceiling radiation dampers shall be provided at the locations prescribed in this section, and shall be shown and properly identified on the building plans by the designer. Where an assembly is required to have both fire dampers and smoke dampers, combination fire/smoke dampers or a fire damper and a smoke damper shall be required.

607.5.1 Fire walls. Ducts and air transfer openings permitted in fire walls in accordance with Section 705.11 of the *International Building Code* shall be protected with approved fire dampers installed in accordance with their listing.

607.5.2 Fire barriers. Duct penetrations and air transfer openings in fire barriers shall be protected with approved fire dampers installed in accordance with their listing.

Exceptions: Fire dampers are not required at penetrations of fire barriers where any of the following apply:

1. Penetrations are tested in accordance with ASTM E 119 as part of the fire-resistance-rated assembly.

2. Ducts are used as part of an approved smoke control system in accordance with Section 513.
3. Such walls are penetrated by ducted HVAC systems, have a required fire-resistance rating of 1 hour or less, are in areas of other than Group H and are in buildings equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2 of the *International Building Code*. For the purposes of this exception, a ducted HVAC system shall be a duct system for the structure's HVAC system. Such a duct system shall be constructed of sheet metal not less than 26-gage (0.0217 inch) [0.55 mm] thickness and shall be continuous from the air-handling appliance or equipment to the air outlet and inlet terminals.

607.5.3 Fire partitions. Duct penetrations in fire partitions shall be protected with approved fire dampers installed in accordance with their listing.

Exceptions: In occupancies other than Group H, fire dampers are not required where any of the following apply:

1. The partitions are tenant separation and corridor walls in buildings equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2 of the *International Building Code* and the duct is protected as a through penetration in accordance with the *International Building Code*.
2. The duct system is constructed of approved materials in accordance with this code and the duct penetrating the wall meets all of the following minimum requirements.
 - 2.1. The duct shall not exceed 100 square inches (0.06 m²).
 - 2.2. The duct shall be constructed of steel a minimum of 0.0217-inch (0.55 mm) in thickness.
 - 2.3. The duct shall not have openings that communicate the corridor with adjacent spaces or rooms.
 - 2.4. The duct shall be installed above a ceiling.
 - 2.5. The duct shall not terminate at a wall register in the fire-resistance-rated wall.
 - 2.6. A minimum 12-inch-long (3048 mm) by 0.060-inch-thick (0.52 mm) steel sleeve shall be centered in each duct opening. The sleeve shall be secured to both sides of the wall and all four sides of the sleeve with minimum 1¹/₂-inch by 1¹/₂-inch by 0.060-inch (38 mm by 38 mm by 1.52 mm) steel retaining angles. The retaining angles shall be secured to the sleeve and the wall with No. 10 (M5) screws. The annular space between the steel sleeve and the wall opening shall be filled with rock (mineral) wool batting on all sides.

607.5.4 Corridors/smoke barriers. A listed smoke damper designed to resist the passage of smoke shall be provided at each point a duct or air transfer opening penetrates a smoke barrier wall or a corridor enclosure required to have smoke and draft control doors in accordance with the *International Building Code*. Smoke dampers and smoke damper actuation methods shall comply with Section 607.5.4.1.

Exceptions:

1. Smoke dampers are not required in corridor penetrations where the building is equipped throughout with an approved smoke control system in accordance with Section 513 and smoke dampers are not necessary for the operation and control of the system.
2. Smoke dampers are not required in smoke barrier penetrations where the openings in ducts are limited to a single smoke compartment and the ducts are constructed of steel.
3. Smoke dampers are not required in corridor penetrations where the duct is constructed of steel not less than 0.019 inch (0.48 mm) in thickness and there are no openings serving the corridor.

607.5.4.1 Smoke damper. The smoke damper shall close upon actuation of a listed smoke detector or detectors installed in accordance with the *International Building Code* and one of the following methods, as applicable:

1. Where a damper is installed within a duct, a smoke detector shall be installed in the duct within 5 feet (1524 mm) of the damper with no air outlets or inlets between the detector and the damper. The detector shall be listed for the air velocity, temperature and humidity anticipated at the point where it is installed.
2. Where a damper is installed above smoke barrier doors in a smoke barrier, a spot-type detector listed for releasing service shall be installed on either side of the smoke barrier door opening.
3. Where a damper is installed within an unducted opening in a wall, a spot-type detector listed for releasing service shall be installed within 5 feet (1524 mm) horizontally of the damper.
4. Where a damper is installed in a corridor wall, the damper shall be permitted to be controlled by a smoke detection system installed in the corridor.
5. Where a total-coverage smoke detector system is provided within all areas served by an HVAC system, dampers shall be permitted to be controlled by the smoke detection system.

607.5.5 Shaft enclosures. Ducts and air transfer openings shall not penetrate a shaft serving as an exit enclosure except as permitted by Section 1019.1.2 of the *International Building Code*.

607.5.6 Penetrations of shaft enclosures. Shaft enclosures that are permitted to be penetrated by ducts and air transfer openings shall be protected with approved fire and smoke dampers installed in accordance with their listing.

Exceptions:

1. Fire dampers are not required at penetrations of shafts where:
 - 1.1. Steel exhaust subducts extend at least 22 inches (559 mm) vertically in exhaust shafts provided there is a continuous airflow upward to the outside; or
 - 1.2. Penetrations are tested in accordance with ASTM E 119 as part of the fire-resistance-rated assembly;
 - 1.3. Ducts are used as part of an approved smoke control system designed and installed in accordance with Section 909 of the *International Building Code*, and where the fire damper will interfere with the operation of the smoke control system; or
 - 1.4. The penetrations are in parking garage exhaust or supply shafts that are separated from other building shafts by not less than 2-hour fire-resistance-rated construction.
2. In Group B occupancies, equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 of the *International Building Code*, smoke dampers are not required at penetrations of shafts where:
 - 2.1. Bathroom and toilet room exhaust openings with steel exhaust subducts, having a wall thickness of at least 0.019 inch (0.48 mm) extend at least 22 inches (559 mm) vertically and the exhaust fan at the upper terminus is powered continuously in accordance with the provisions of Section 909.11 of the *International Building Code*, and maintains airflow upward to the outside, or
 - 2.2. Ducts are used as part of an approved smoke control system designed and installed in accordance with Section 909 of the *International Building Code*, and where the smoke damper will interfere with the operation of the smoke control system.
3. Smoke dampers are not required at penetration of exhaust or supply shafts in parking garages that are separated from other building shafts by not less than 2-hour fire-resistance-rated construction.

607.6 Horizontal assemblies. Penetrations by air ducts of a floor, floor/ceiling assembly or the ceiling membrane of a roof/ceiling assembly shall be protected by a shaft enclosure that complies with the *International Building Code* or shall comply with this section.

607.6.1 Through penetrations. In occupancies other than Groups I-2 and I-3, a duct and air transfer opening system

constructed of approved materials in accordance with this code that penetrates a fire-resistance-rated floor/ceiling assembly that connects not more than two stories is permitted without shaft enclosure protection provided a fire damper is installed at the floor line.

Exception: A duct is permitted to penetrate three floors or less without a fire damper at each floor provided it meets all of the following requirements.

1. The duct shall be contained and located within the cavity of a wall and shall be constructed of steel not less than 0.019 inch (0.48 mm) (26 gauge) in thickness.
2. The duct shall open into only one dwelling unit or sleeping unit and the duct system shall be continuous from the unit to the exterior of the building.
3. The duct shall not exceed 4-inch (102 mm) nominal diameter and the total area of such ducts shall not exceed 100 square inches (64 516 mm²) for any 100 square feet (9.3 m²) of the floor area.
4. The annular space around the duct is protected with materials that prevent the passage of flame and hot gases sufficient to ignite cotton waste where subjected to ASTM E 119 time-temperature conditions under a minimum positive pressure differential of 0.01 inch (2.49 Pa) of water at the location of the penetration for the time period equivalent to the fire-resistance rating of the construction penetrated.
5. Grille openings located in a ceiling of a fire-resistance-rated floor/ceiling or roof/ceiling assembly shall be protected with a ceiling radiation damper in accordance with Section 607.6.2.

607.6.2 Membrane penetrations. Where duct systems constructed of approved materials in accordance with this code penetrate a ceiling of a fire-resistance-rated floor/ceiling or roof/ceiling assembly, shaft enclosure protection is not required provided an approved ceiling radiation damper is installed at the ceiling line. Where a duct is not attached to a diffuser that penetrates a ceiling of a fire-resistance-rated floor/ceiling or roof/ceiling assembly, shaft enclosure protection is not required provided an approved ceiling radiation damper is installed at the ceiling line. Ceiling radiation dampers shall be installed in accordance with UL 555C and constructed in accordance with the details listed in a fire-resistance-rated assembly or shall be labeled to function as a heat barrier for air-handling outlet/inlet penetrations in the ceiling of a fire-resistance-rated assembly. Ceiling radiation dampers shall not be required where ASTM E 119 fire tests have shown that ceiling radiation dampers are not necessary in order to maintain the fire-resistance rating of the assembly. Ceiling radiation dampers shall not be required where exhaust duct penetrations are protected in accordance with Section 712.4.2 of the *International Building Code* and the exhaust ducts are located within the cavity of a wall and do not pass through another dwelling unit or tenant space.

607.6.3 Nonfire-resistance-rated assemblies. Duct systems constructed of approved materials in accordance with this code that penetrate nonfire-resistance-rated floor assemblies

that connect not more than two stories are permitted without shaft enclosure protection provided that the annular space between the assembly and the penetrating duct is filled with an approved noncombustible material to resist the free passage of flame and the products of combustion. Duct systems constructed of approved materials in accordance with this code that penetrate non-rated floor assemblies that connect not more than three stories are permitted without shaft enclosure protection provided that the annular space between the assembly and the penetrating duct is filled with an approved noncombustible material to resist the free passage of flame and the products of combustion, and a fire damper is installed at each floor line.

Exception: Fire dampers are not required in ducts within individual residential dwelling units.

607.7 Flexible ducts and air connectors. Flexible ducts and air connectors shall not pass through any fire-resistance-rated assembly.

