

## STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-24-06

December 5, 2006

The following is offered in response to your November 30, 2006 letter to me in which you seek a formal interpretation of the Exception to Section R317.2 of the 2003 International Residential Code portion of the 2005 State Building Code.

**Question:** Does the code permit gas piping to penetrate the common two-hour rated wall between Townhouse units if a listed through-penetration system is employed?

**Answer:** No. The exception to Section R317.2 specifically prohibits plumbing or mechanical equipment, ducts or vents in the cavity of the common wall. The wall submitted consists of two layers of 1 inch gypsum liner in the center of the wall, surrounded on each side with a 1 inch air space, 2x4 wood studs at 16" o.c. and an outer layer of 5/8 inch gypsum board on the dwelling unit side of the assembly. While at a casual glance this might appear to be two separate walls, in fact, since the center core of two layers of 1" gypsum liner is what provides the two-hour rating, the wall is in fact a common two-hour fire-resistance-rated wall permitted by the noted exception. Since a through penetration of the gas pipe would result in mechanical equipment in the cavity, such penetration is not permitted by the code.