



FIREBLOCKING

City of Lawrence

Department of Public Works
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This handout is intended only as a guide to the subject matter covered herein and is based in part on the 2020 Indiana Residential Code. While every attempt has been made to insure the correctness of this handout, no guarantees are made to its accuracy or completeness. Responsibility for compliance with applicable codes and ordinances falls on the owner or contractor. For specific questions regarding code requirements, refer to the Indiana Building Code or contact your local Building Department.

Fireblocking, as the name implies, is intended to block the spread of fire from one concealed space to another. In the average home, the areas where fireblocking is most likely going to be required are:

- Vertically at the ceiling and floor levels
- Horizontally at intervals not exceeding 10 feet
- In concealed spaces between stair stringers at the top and bottom of the run.
- Enclosed space under stairs that is accessed by a door or access panel shall have walls, under-stair surface and any soffits protected on the enclosed side with 1/2-inch (12.7 mm) gypsum board. At openings around wires, vents, pipes, and ducts where those items penetrate a top or bottom wall plate.
 - At the interconnection between wall and ceiling spaces. Most likely this will happen at soffits and dropped ceilings.

There are a number of ways to comply with fireblocking requirements for wire, vent, pipe and duct penetrations.

- There are caulks on the market for sealing the annular opening around wires, vents, pipes, and ducts. Some caulks are listed as "noncombustible". Others may also be "noncombustible" and "intumescent". Either product is acceptable. They should be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Unfaced fiberglass batts may be used as fireblocking provided that the batt is at least 16 inches in height measured vertically and fills the full width of the stud space. Insulation should be packed around the penetrating opening including the opening in the top or bottom plate. If the wire, pipe, vent or duct penetrates both the top and bottom wall plate, a 16-inch bat must be placed at both the top and bottom of the cavity, or the entire cavity may be filled.
- Fire retardant spray foam is not approved for fireblocking purposes.

Fireblocking the interconnection of wall to ceiling spaces can be more confusing. If there is a pathway for air to move from a stud space to a joist space, the path must be fireblocked. In those cases, the use of 1/2" gypsum board, 2 inch nominal lumber, 3/4 inch plywood or particleboard, or two thicknesses of 1 inch nominal lumber may be used. Fiberglass batts may also be used and are the most common way to fireblock soffits at exterior walls.

Fireblocking is typically inspected at the time of the rough-in inspection and should be complete at that time. Don't forget to install around the tub/shower drains!

