



ICC ORANGE EMPIRE CHAPTER CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

DATE: May 29, 2008

QUESTION AND CODE SECTION:

2007 California Building Code – Section 2304.11 contains provisions for protection of wood framing against decay and termites. These provisions seem to indicate that an increased separation between wood and exposed earth is needed as compared to the previous 2001 California Building Code.

Please provide interpretation and clarification of the application of the code requirements related to the 8-inch wood-to-earth separation specified in Section 2304.11.2.2 – Wood supported by exterior foundation walls.

DISCUSSION:

The 2007 California Building Code – Section 2304.11.2.2 indicates that wood “resting” on exterior foundation walls shall be naturally durable or preservative-treated wood when located less than 8 inches from exposed earth. Previous editions of the code required a 6-inch separation.

The International Code Council (ICC) publication – *2006 International Building Code Commentary – Figure 2304.11.2.1 (see attached figure)* illustrates the foundation sill plate separated from the exposed earth by 8 inches.

The 8-inch separation to the bottom of the sill plate is not necessary when a preservative-treated sill plate is used. This IBC requirement is intended to address problems associated with moisture entering the structure at the foundation. Since the Orange County does not experience accumulation of snow around buildings, Southern California’s dry climate minimizes the exterior wall moisture problems.

INTERPRETATION:

Since the exterior wall sill plate is of pressure-treated material the 8-inch separation from bottom of sill plate to exposed earth is unnecessary. Providing 6-inch separation between the bottom of the sill plate and the exposed earth provides 8-inch (nominal) separation to the

remaining wood framing resting on the sill plate and allows the remaining wood to be untreated.

In areas with subterranean termites, the 8-inch separation to bottom of sill plate should be utilized.

Where wood siding is utilized with less than 6-inch separation to exposed earth the siding, exterior wall sheathing and wall framing shall be of naturally durable or treated wood.

Attached figures 1 through 4 illustrate the proposed application of 2007 California Building Code – Sections 2304.11.2.2 and 2304.11.2.6

DATE OF CHAPTER MEMBERS' APPROVAL:

Illustrations from International Code Council publications

When 8-inch wood-to-earth separation is maintained sill plate is not required to be treated

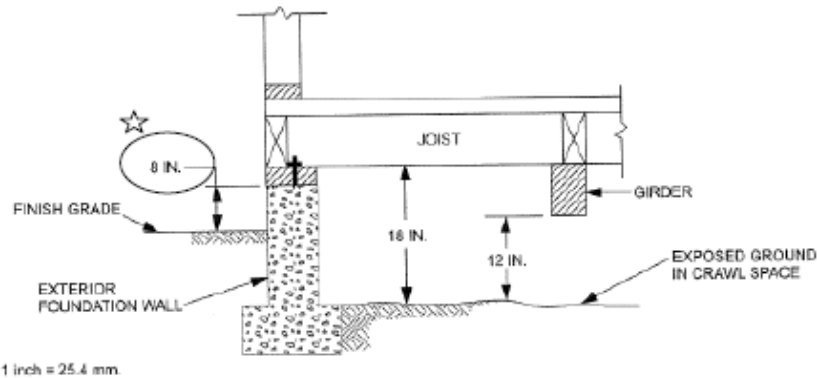
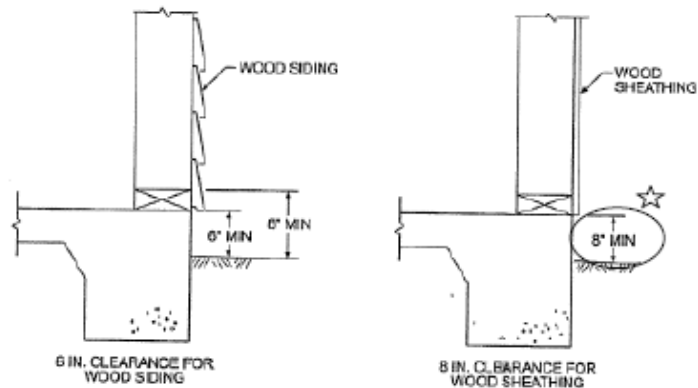


Figure 2304.11.2.1
WOOD-FRAMING CLEARANCES



For SI: 1 inch = 25.4 mm

CLEARANCE FOR WOOD SIDING AND SHEATHING
FIGURE 23-13

The Orange Empire Chapter of ICC – Code Interpretation Committee has determined that the 8-inch wood-to-earth separation is not required where excessive exterior moisture and subterranean termites do not exist. [See additional sketches on the following page]

Orange Empire Chapter ICC --- Code Interpretation 2007 CBC – Section 2304.11

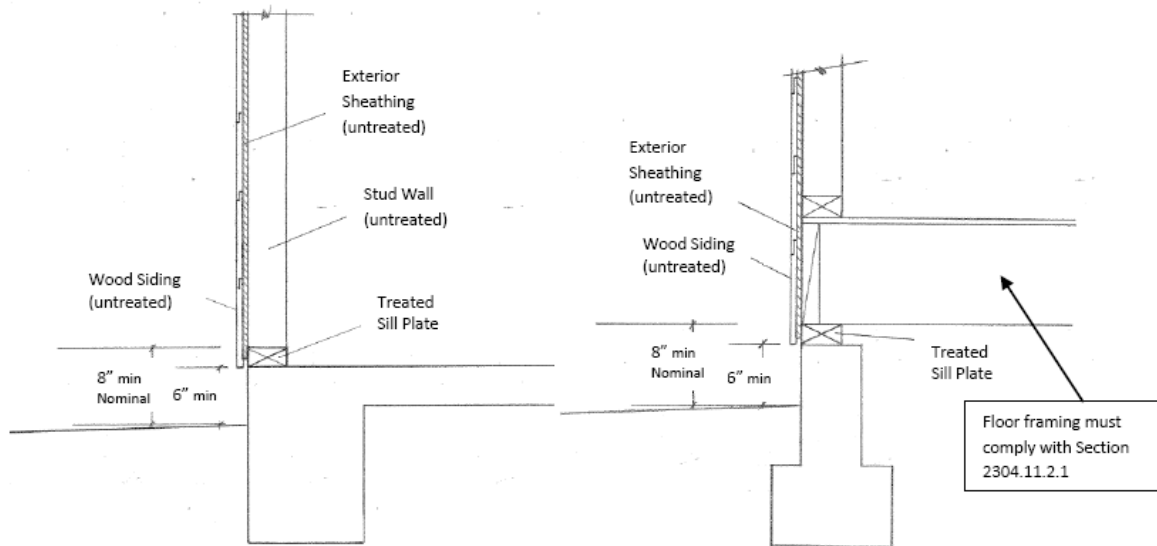


Figure -1 Wood Siding over Exterior Sheathing slab-on-grade (section 2304.11.2.2)

Figure -2 Wood Siding over Exterior Sheathing raised wood floor (section 2304.11.2.2)

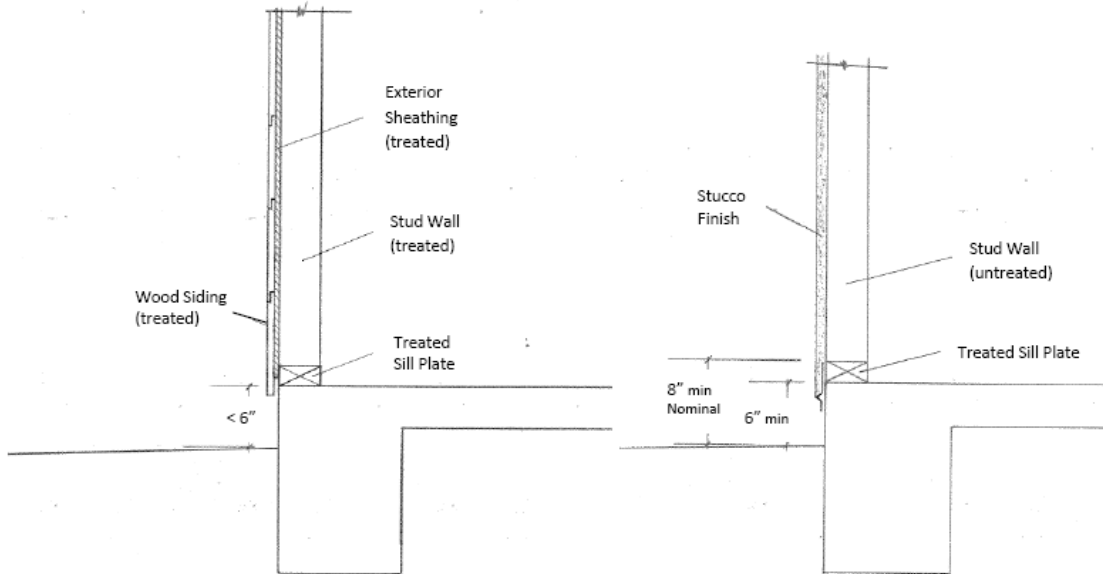


Figure -3 Wood Siding less than 6" from Earth (section 2304.11.2.6)

Figure -4 Stucco Finish w/o Exterior Sheathing

Note: Site grading and exterior drainage must comply with Section 1803.3 and Foundation elevation must comply with Section 1805.3.4