



Issue Date:	November 7, 2011; Revised January 2016; Revised November 2025		
Code/Section:	IRC Section R302.1		
Developed By:	Staff	Revised by:	John-Jozef "JJ" Proczka, Matthew Miles

**Purpose:**

This document communicates interpretations regarding three situations in IRC scoped projects with respect to *fire separation distance* and associated passive resistance to fire spread.

**Post Fire Separation Distance:**

Openings between a row of supporting vertical elements such as posts or columns must meet the opening restrictions in walls based on the post's *fire separation distance*. Projections occur beyond the outer edges of these elements. See Figure 1.

**Projection Requirements:**

Projections that are permitted to be present per Table R302.1, but do not have a 0-hour rating requirement, need to have one of the following features:

- A. Fireblocking provided between the supporting beam or plate and the roof sheathing.  
See Figure 1 for a figure of this option being depicted.
- B. Fire-retardant-treated wood.
- C. Noncombustible.
- D. 1 hour fire-resistance rating.

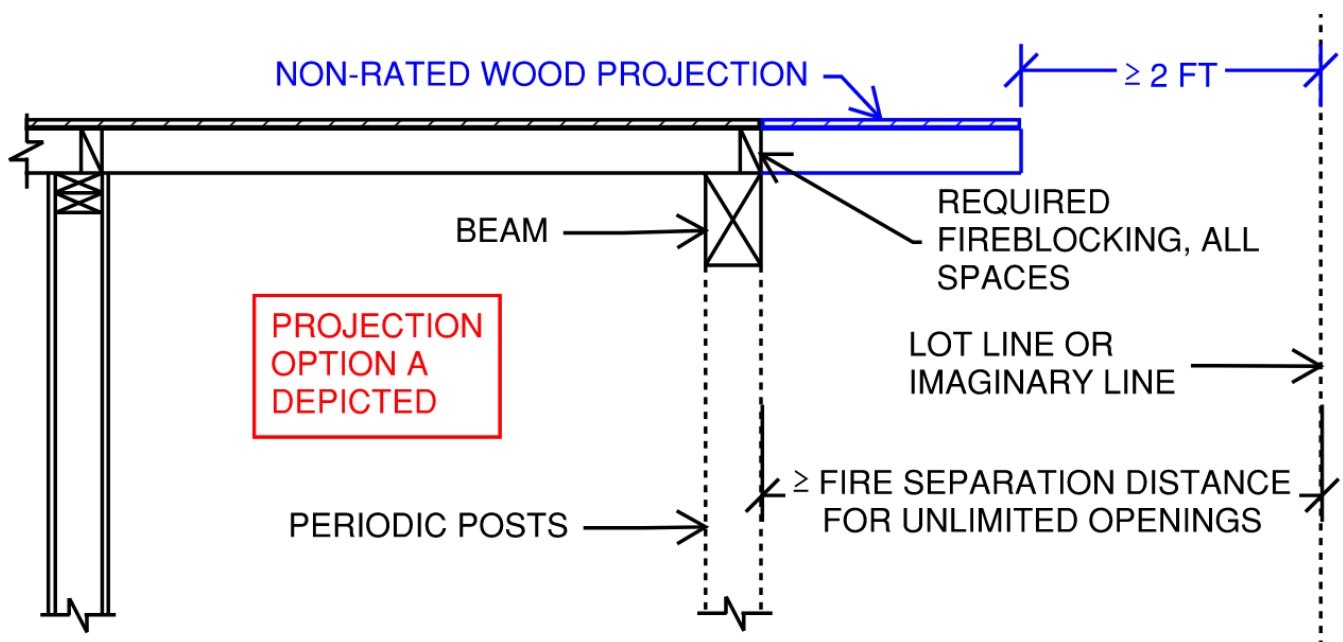


Figure 1 – Fire Separation Distance.

**Projection option A depicted. Other options are acceptable.**

**Fire Separation Distance Tolerance:**

The exterior wall fire protection and opening provisions of IRC Table R302.1 are permitted to have a tolerance of up to 3 inches when applied to the definition of *fire separation distance* for the thickness of exterior wall covering assemblies beyond the framing. This does not include projections. No figure provided.

Example 1: A nonsprinkled house has the outer edge of its studs 5 feet from the lot line. It has an exterior wall covering assembly that is 3 inches thick beyond the edge of the studs. The fire separation distance is 4'-9". This is acceptable for having a 0-hour fire-resistance rating.

Example 2: A nonsprinkled house has the outer edge of its studs 5 feet from the lot line. It has an exterior wall covering assembly that is 4 inches thick beyond the edge of the studs. The fire separation distance is 4'-8". This wall requires a fire-resistance rated exterior wall assembly.

**Rationale:**

**Posts:** Exterior walls are not permitted to have openings when the fire separation distance is small, and to have a small percentage allowed when it is slightly farther. There are different rules for projections beyond exterior walls. This leads to the intent confusion regarding allowing what appears to be approximately 90 percent openings at rows of columns or posts in distances not allowed to have or only allowed to have limited openings. This document treats the rows in the same way as exterior walls.

**Projections:** IRC Table R302.1 provides many options for protecting projections within distances with relatively smaller fire separation distances but still allowed. The only extrapolation interpretation presented is for noncombustible construction, which is similar to the fire-retardant-treated wood provisions directly present. See footnotes for the fireblocking option.

**Tolerance:** The 2012 and 2018 amendments to *fire separation distance* indicated that the distance should be measured to the wall framing. This was not continued in the 2024 amendment. There is a concern that large distances of combustible wall assemblies, such as foam plastic, would extend quite far past the wall framing. However, in the spirit of the old amendment, a tolerance of 3 inches is introduced to account for the largest likely continuous insulation requirement to meet the IECC prescriptive wall provisions.