

Common building plan review questions answered by CCLD staff

The questions below are part of an ongoing series featuring frequently asked questions received by CCLD's [Building Plan Review Section](#). The responses are the opinions of the plan review staff and do not represent an official division or State Building Official interpretation.

Q: If access to mechanical equipment on the roof is not required due to the parapet height, can I use a fixed interior vertical ladder?

A: Yes. If access is not required by Minnesota Rules 1305.1209 or 1346.0306, the installation of a vertical ladder would be considered to be exceeding the minimum code requirement. Permanent ladders must be in compliance with applicable Minnesota OSHA requirements.

Q: Two buildings are on the same lot. For the purposes of “area increase for frontage” do I measure to the face of the adjacent building or to the imaginary lot line?

A: An imaginary lot line is part of the definition of ‘fire separation distance’ under IBC Sec. 702. This is used to determine the required fire-resistance rating and opening protection of exterior walls. Fire separation distance is not referenced under IBC Sec. 506.2 for increase due to frontage. Instead the phrase “public way or open space” is used. Therefore the distance is measured to the face of the building. This would also permit the open space of a court to be used, which was not permitted under the Uniform Building Code.

Q: Are sprinklers permitted in elevator machine rooms and elevator shafts?

A: By amendment, both the SBC and SFC prohibit sprinkler protection in elevator shafts, machine rooms and elevator pits (SBC 1305.0903 subp. 5a). However, facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Health as a hospital or nursing home are required to comply with federal guidelines which require these spaces to be sprinkled and therefore sprinkler protection of these spaces is permitted for these facilities.

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- Keep up-to-date with code changes at DLI's [rulemaking web page](#).

