

The purpose of this Technical Bulletin is to clarify construction requirements for plenums used as return air for forced air units (FAUs).

These requirements apply only to air duct penetrations separation between a Group R, Division 3 and a Group U Occupancy, provided such ducts within the U Occupancy are constructed of minimum .019 inch thick (26 gauge) galvanized steel sheet with no openings into that occupancy per California Building Code section 406.1.4 Item 2, and California Residential Code (CRC) Section R302.7.

I. PENETRATION OF ENCLOSED SPACES UNDER STAIRWAYS

Penetration of the separation may occur in enclosed spaces under stairways where no access is provided and where such spaces are used as return air plenum for FAUs. The plenum space under the stairs is not considered to be usable space and need not comply with the requirements of CBC Section 1009.6.3 and CRC section R302.7. See Figure 1.

Documents Referenced in this Technical Bulletin

- 2013 California Building Code, (CBC)
- 2013 California Residential Code, (CRC)

II. PENETRATION IN OTHER LOCATIONS

Penetration of the separation may occur wherever construction is as shown in Figure 2 and the return air grille opens directly into the return air plenum under a forced air unit.

III. PROTECTION OF PLUMBING AND ELECTRICAL WIRING

If any wall spaces adjacent to the plenum contain plumbing or electrical wiring they must be separated from the plenum by 1/2-inch gypsum wallboard, except when plenum rated plumbing piping, electrical wiring, and metallic piping are used.

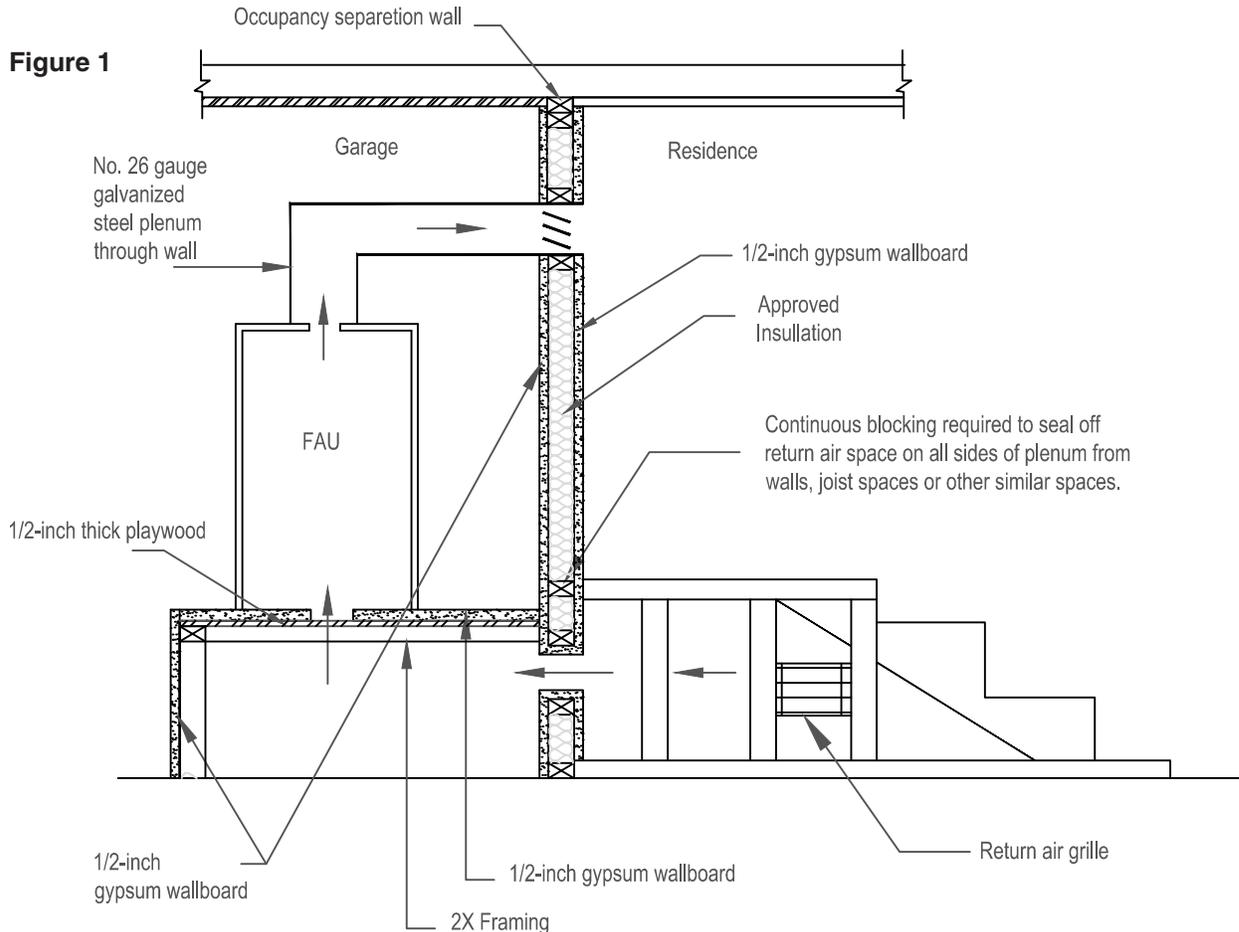


Figure 2

