

(Effective March 15, 2024)

WAC 51-52-0607 Section 607—Ducts and transfer openings.

607.5.2 Fire barriers. Ducts and air transfer openings that penetrate fire barriers shall be protected with *listed* fire dampers installed in accordance with their listing. Ducts and air transfer openings shall not penetrate enclosures for interior exit stairways and ramps and exit passageways except as permitted by Sections 1023.5 and 1024.6, respectively, of the *International Building Code*.

EXCEPTION: Fire dampers are not required at penetrations of fire barriers where any of the following apply:

1. Penetrations are tested in accordance with ASTM E119 or UL 263 as part of the fire-resistance-rated assembly.
2. Ducts are used as part of an *approved* smoke control system in accordance with Section 513 and where the fire damper would interfere with the operation of the smoke control system.
3. Such walls are penetrated by fully ducted HVAC systems, have a required fire-resistance rating of 1 hour or less, are in areas of other than Group H and are in buildings equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2 of the *International Building Code*. For the purposes of this exception, a fully ducted HVAC system shall be a duct system for the structure's HVAC system. Such a duct system shall be constructed of sheet steel not less than 26 gage (0.0217 inch (0.55 mm)) thickness and shall be continuous from the air-handling *appliance* or *equipment* to the air outlet and inlet terminals. Flexible air connectors shall be permitted in a fully ducted system, limited to the following installations:
 - 3.1. Nonmetallic flexible connections that connect a duct to an air handling unit or *equipment* located within a mechanical room or located outdoors in accordance with Section 603.9.
 - 3.2. Nonmetallic flexible air connectors in accordance with Section 603.6.2 that connect an overhead metal duct to a diffuser, grille, or register where the metal duct and diffuser, grille, or register are located within the same room.

607.5.3 Fire partitions. Ducts and air transfer openings that penetrate fire partitions shall be protected with *listed* fire dampers installed in accordance with their listing.

EXCEPTION: In *occupancies* other than Group H, fire dampers are not required where any of the following apply:

1. Corridor walls in buildings equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2 of the *International Building Code* and the duct is protected as a through penetration in accordance with Section 714 of the *International Building Code*.
2. The partitions are tenant partitions in covered and open mall buildings where the walls are not required by provisions elsewhere in the *International Building Code* to extend to the underside of the floor or roof sheathing, slab, or deck above.
3. The duct system is constructed of *approved* materials in accordance with Section 603 and the duct penetrating the wall complies with all of the following requirements:
 - 3.1. The duct shall not exceed 100 square inches (0.06 m²).
 - 3.2. The duct shall be constructed of steel not less than 0.0217 inch (0.55 mm) in thickness.
 - 3.3. The duct shall not have openings that communicate the corridor with adjacent spaces or rooms.
 - 3.4. The duct shall be installed above a ceiling.
 - 3.5. The duct shall not terminate at a wall register in the fire-resistance-rated wall.
 - 3.6. A minimum 12-inch-long (305 mm) by 0.060-inch-thick (1.52 mm) steel sleeve shall be centered in each duct opening. The sleeve shall be secured to both sides of the wall and all four sides of the sleeve with minimum 1.5-inch by 1.5-inch by 0.060-inch (38 mm by 38 mm by 1.52 mm) steel retaining angles. The retaining angles shall be secured to the sleeve and the wall with No. 10 (M5) screws. The annular space between the steel sleeve and the wall opening shall be filled with rock (mineral) wool batting on all sides.
4. Such walls are penetrated by fully ducted HVAC systems, have a required fire-resistance rating of 1 hour or less, and are in areas of other than Group H and are in buildings equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1 or 903.3.1.2 of the *International Building Code*. For the purposes of this exception, a fully ducted HVAC system shall be a duct system for conveying supply, return or *exhaust air* as part of the structure's HVAC system. Such a duct system shall be constructed of sheet steel not less than 26 gage (0.0217 inch (0.55 mm)) in thickness and shall be continuous from the air-handling *appliance* or *equipment* to the air outlet and inlet terminals. Flexible air connections shall be permitted in a fully ducted system, limited to the following installations:
 - 4.1. Nonmetallic flexible connections that connect a duct to an air-handling unit or *equipment* located within a mechanical room or located outdoors in accordance with Section 603.9.
 - 4.2. Nonmetallic flexible air connectors in accordance with Section 603.2.6 that connect an overhead metal duct to a diffuser, grille, or register where the metal duct and diffuser, grille, or register are located in the same room. Where the fully ducted HVAC system metal ductwork penetrates a corridor fire partition, the ductwork shall be continuous without openings to the corridor, to a mechanical room, or to a shaft enclosure.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 19.27.031 and 19.27.074. WSR 23-02-055, 23-12-106, and 23-20-025, § 51-52-0607, filed 1/3/23, 6/7/23, and 9/25/23, effective 3/15/24.]