

# **Fremont**

## **Building Official**

### **Code Enforcement**

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#### **“Healthy Homes”**

The International Residential Code (IRC) contains provisions for governing moistures, pests and ventilation. The attributes address water and moisture controls, well ventilated indoor air, and pest free environments. These provisions are generally included in all new construction. While these code elements are found throughout the various code editions their general focus remains the same – providing for a “healthy home” environment. These code elements provide the foundation for good practices for housing construction and maintenance.

The list below is but a partial listing of ways in which the building codes attempt to influence the living environment through construction requirements. It is advisable to insure that all of these elements are addressed during the initial construction phases of your home – many of the provisions are all but impossible to properly fix after the fact.

Condensate disposal (liquid combustion by-products) shall be collected and discharged through an approved system. In many cases this is done through the use of a condensate pump connected to an outside drain.

Clothes dryers shall convey the moisture to the outside of the building.

Ducts that provide outdoor air intakes and exhausts are to be provided with automatic or gravity dampers

Gypsum ducts (ducts constructed with gypsum products over wall cavities) are limited to return air and only in systems with evaporative coolers.

Provisions shall be made to prevent the formation of condensation on the outside of the ducts (generally this is done with insulation). All joints and seams shall be sealed

Bathtub and shower areas are to be finished with nonabsorbent materials. Such surfaces are to extend to a height not less than 6 feet above the floor.

In all framed walls, floors, and roof/ceiling assemblies a vapor retarder is to be installed on the warm-in-winter side of the insulation.

Free space must be provided between insulation and roof sheathing, this ventilating area must be a minimum of 1 inch.

Lots are to be graded so as to drain surface water away from the foundation. The grade shall be a minimum of 6 inches within the first 10 feet.

Drains are to be provided around all concrete foundations that enclose habitable or usable space located below grade.

Foundation walls that contain habitable or usable space below grade shall be damp proofed from the top of the footing to the finished grade. In areas of high water table water proofing of the foundation walls is required.

Under floor spaces (crawlspaces) between the bottom of the floor joists and the earth are required to have ventilation openings through foundation walls to provide air flow. A minimum net area of openings must be not less than 1 sqft per 150 sqft and such openings shall be located within 3 feet of each corner of a building foundation. An alternative would be to provide continuous mechanical ventilation.

Crawlspaces shall have all vegetation and organic materials removed and replaced with stone or gravel.

Finished grade of the area within the crawlspace shall be higher than the outside finished grade, unless approved drainage systems are installed.

A 4" thick base course of crushed stone or gravel is to be placed under all concrete floors. An approved vapor retarder is to be placed between the base course and the floor slab.

When basement walls are considered conditioned space – basement walls shall be insulated. When basement walls are not considered conditioned space – the floor under shall be insulated.

Exterior walls are to be provided with a weather resistant envelope behind the exterior wall coverings. Flashing is to be provided as required to prevent penetration of water from the exterior.

Concrete foundation walls are to extend above the finished grade a minimum of 4 inches.

Roofing installation must be in full compliance with building code requirements; to include fastening, underlayment, ice and water shield, slope requirements, and flashing.

All habitable rooms shall have a glazing area of not less than 8 percent of the room floor area. Room ventilation shall be through windows and doors or other approved openings to the outside air. The minimum opening to the outside shall be 4 percent. Exceptions do exist to this provision provided adequate mechanical ventilation and artificial lighting is met.

Radon gases should be prevented from entering the living areas of the home and/or provisions for future placement of removal systems should be provided. While this is not yet a code provisions requirement – good construction practices take this requirement into consideration.

Openings from private garages into sleeping areas are not permitted. Garages are to be separated from the residence and its attic area with gypsum board applied to the garage side.

Ventilation openings are to be covered with materials to prevent entry of birds, squirrels, rodents, snakes, insects and other similar creatures.

Preservative-treated wood (pressure treated wood) shall be used in all areas of contact with the earth and/or concrete. Joists or the bottom of wood structural flooring shall be no closer than 18 inches to exposed earth. Girders are allowed to be within 12 inches.

Interior spaces intended for human occupancy shall be required to be provided with heating systems capable of maintaining a minimum of 68 degrees.

Property located with special flood hazard areas must meet certain provision of the code relative to placement above base flood elevations.

Fuel fired appliances shall not be located in, or obtain combustion air from, any of the following places: sleeping rooms, bathrooms, toilet rooms, or storage closets. Specific exceptions do exist to this provision.