

## CHAPTER 3 BUILDING PLANNING

### SECTION R317.2 IRC Interpretation No. 75-06 2003 Edition Issued: 04-18-2007

**R317.2 Townhouses.** Each townhouse shall be considered a separate building and shall be separated by fire-resistance rated wall assemblies meeting the requirements of Section R302 for exterior walls.

**Exception:** A common 2-hour fire-resistance-rated wall is permitted for townhouses if such walls do not contain plumbing or mechanical equipment, ducts or vents in the cavity of the common wall. Electrical installations shall be installed in accordance with Chapters 33 through 42. Penetrations of electrical outlet boxes shall be in accordance with Section R317.3.

#### REFERENCED SECTIONS:

**R101.2 Scope.** The provisions of the *International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* shall apply to the construction, alteration, movement, enlargement, replacement, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, removal and demolition of detached one- and two-family dwellings and multiple single-family dwellings (townhouses) not more than three stories in height with a separate means of egress and their accessory structures.

**Exception:** Existing buildings undergoing repair, alteration or additions, and change of occupancy shall be permitted to comply with the *International Existing Building Code*.

#### SECTION R202 DEFINITIONS

**LOT.** A portion or parcel of land considered as a unit.

**LOT LINE.** A line dividing one lot from another, or from a street or any public place.

**TOWNHOUSE.** A single-family dwelling unit constructed in a group of three or more attached units in which each unit extends from foundation to roof and with open space on at least two sides.

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**Q:** Is a common 2-hour fire-resistance-rated wall, in accordance with the exception to Section R317.2 of the *International Residential Code*, permitted for separation of individual townhouse dwelling units when separation incorporates a lot line between each townhouse dwelling unit?

**A:** Yes. The townhouse provisions in the *International Residential Code* are not based on the presence, or lack thereof, of either a property line or lot line between single-family dwelling units within a townhouse building. Section R317.2 requires separation by two 1-hour fire-resistance-rated walls with exposure from both sides, or by a common 2-hour fire-resistance-rated wall per the exception.

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