



CAL FIRE - Office of the State Fire Marshal Information Bulletin 21-003

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2019 Intervening Code California Building Code, Chapter 7A Vents Requirement in the Wildland Urban Interface Areas

The purpose of this Information Bulletin is to clarify an issue regarding the vent requirements in the upcoming 2019 Intervening Code Cycle that will go into effect on July 1, 2021. The regulations in the California Building Code (CBC), Chapter 7A, Section 706A and Residential Building Code Section R337.6.2.1 excludes through-roof vents (dormer), roof ridge and off-ridge vents (field) because they are not mounted on a vertical wall. Previously, the prescriptive code requirements for vents in the CBC allowed vents in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) that were made of noncombustible material with mesh openings of 1/16" to 1/8". This section has been deleted. CBC Chapter 7A, Section 706A requires vents for use in the WUI areas to be listed to ASTM E2886 (either by the State Fire Marshal or by an approved testing laboratory) provided the vent meets the following:

1. No flaming ignition during the Ember Test
2. No flaming ignition during the Integrity Test portion of the Flame Intrusion Test
3. The maximum temperature of the unexposed side of the vent not to exceed 350°C.

However, the currently adopted ASTM E2886 standard clearly defined that the test method evaluates the ability of exterior vents that mount vertically or horizontally to resist the entry of embers and flame penetration through the vent. It excludes vents that are installed on a sloped roof, including through-roof vents (dormer), roof ridge and off-ridge (field) vents. To obtain a State Fire Marshal listing or to be listed by an approved testing laboratory, the vent must be tested to the current adopted ASTM E2886 standard. All testing performed using a draft or modified test standard that has not been formally adopted or recognized will not be accepted and a listing will not be granted.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is working to resolve the issue. California Building Code Section 1.11.2.4 allows local officials and other enforcing agencies to "approve" alternative materials, designs or methods of construction provided the

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proposed design complies with the intent of the provisions of this code, and provides equivalent effectiveness as prescribed by code.

One of the alternative methods that the local jurisdiction should consider is to allow the prescriptive code for vents installed on a sloped roof with 1/16" minimum to 1/8" maximum mesh and made of non-combustible material in the WUI areas until this issue is resolved.

Should you have any questions regarding this Information Bulletin, please contact Code Development and Analysis Division.