



# TOWN of PORTOLA VALLEY

Town Hall: 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028 Tel: (650) 851-1700 Fax: (650) 851-4677

June 12, 2009

To Whom It May Concern,

The Town of Portola Valley Town Council recently adopted an ordinance for the Town-wide adoption of Chapter 7A, including a definition of "new building" as it relates to the requirements of Chapter 7A of the Building Code. The ordinance amends the Town's Building Regulations requiring the use of ignition resistant materials and construction methods. All new structures shall comply with the Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure as specified in Chapter 7A of the 2007 California Building Code.

A New Building shall be defined as: A new structure or a substantial addition/remodel to an existing structure where the remodel combined with any additions to the structure affects 50% or more of the exterior wall plane surface or affects 50% or more of the floor area.

1. Where no studs remain or, if some studs remain, the wall except for the studs has been stripped bare such that one can see through the wall, the wall affected by such changes shall be included in computing the amount of affected exterior wall plane surface for the purpose of applying this definition.
2. Where any structural changes are made in the building, such as walls, columns, beams, or girders, floor or ceiling joists and covering, roof rafters, roof diaphragms, foundations, piles or retaining walls or similar components, the floor area of all room affected by such changes shall be included in computing affected floor areas for purposes of applying this definition.

Roofing: Non-combustible or Class A roofing is already the standard of care for the Town. Additionally, the space between a roof covering and roof decking must be designed to prevent the intrusion of flames and embers. There are specifications for flashing, and requirements that roof gutters are "provided with a means to prevent the accumulation of leaves and debris in the gutter."

Attic ventilation: Attic vents shall resist the intrusion of flame and embers into the attic area of the structure, or shall be protected by corrosion-resistant, non-combustible wire mesh with ¼ inch openings. Also, eaves and soffits shall be protected by ignition-resistant materials or non-combustible construction on the exposed underside.

Exterior walls: Exterior walls are required to be non-combustible or ignition-resistant material, heavy timber, or log wall construction, and must provide protection from the intrusion of flames and embers. Exterior wall vents must resist the intrusion of flame and embers into the structure or vents shall be screened with corrosion-resistant, non-

combustible wire mesh with ¼ inch openings. Exterior windows, window walls, glazed doors, and glazed opening within exterior doors shall be insulating-glass units with the exterior pane tempered, or glass block units, or have a fire-resistant rating of not less than 20 minutes. Exterior doors are also required to utilize a non-combustible construction, or solid core wood with other design parameters.

Decking: Decking within ten feet of the primary structure must be constructed with ignition-resistant material, or of heavy timber, exterior fire-retardant treated wood, or approved non-combustible materials.

Underfloors: The underside of cantilevered and overhanging portions of the building must maintain the ignition-resistant integrity of the exterior walls

Further, the Town Council voted to adjust the existing fire sprinkler requirements from a 75% valuation to meet the same criteria as indicated in the above definition of a New Building at the 50% threshold.

A property owner wishing to replace their roofs, windows, siding and decking must also comply with the specifications of Chapter 7A.

A copy of Ordinance No. 2009-377 and a conformance checklist for building permit submittals are enclosed for your review. The checklist must be submitted with all building permit applications beginning June 27, 2009. If you have any questions or need any further clarification, please feel free to contact us at (650) 851-1700, extension 216 or visit the Town's website at [www.portolavalley.net](http://www.portolavalley.net)

Sincerely,

Leslie A. Lambert  
Planning Manager

Gary Fitzer  
Senior Building Official

enclosure