

2018 SRC Code Interpretation

SRC 302.2
Townhouse Unit Separation
Release Date: 2-1-2022
Page 1 of 6

The following interpretation is intended to provide guidance to staff for consistency of review and is subject to change without notice. Application of this interpretation to specific projects may vary.

Code Issue:

SRC R302.2 requires townhouse units be separated by one of the methods described in SRC R302.2.1 and SRC R302.2.2.

SRC R302.2.3 requires the fire-resistance-rated wall assembly separating townhouse units to be continuous from foundation to the underside of the roof sheathing, deck or slab and the full length of the wall or assembly.

Because the Chapter 2 definition for floor area includes all unenclosed areas that are under the horizontal projection of the roof, canopy, balcony, deck, or floor above, the wall separating the townhouse units needs to be continuous, both vertically and horizontally, through all enclosed and unenclosed floor area, and to the edge of all projections.

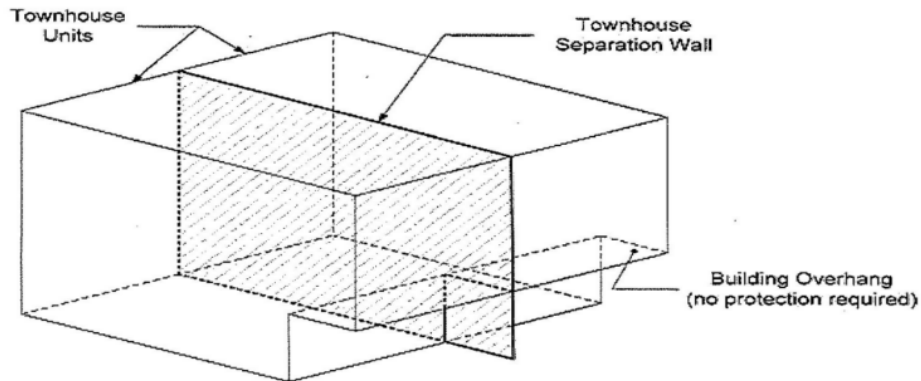
SRC R302.2.3 describes the protection required where a story extends beyond the exterior wall of a story below and provides Figures R302.2(1) and R302.2(2). However, many configurations exist that do not match the figures in the code. When do the figures in the code apply and when do the figures not apply? When the figures in the code do not apply, how does SDCI determine the protection required between townhouse units?

Note that the following interpretation only applies to townhouse units that are not located above shared parking spaces, driveways, and/or other common space.

Code Interpretation:

Item 1: Figures R302.2(1) and R302.2(2)

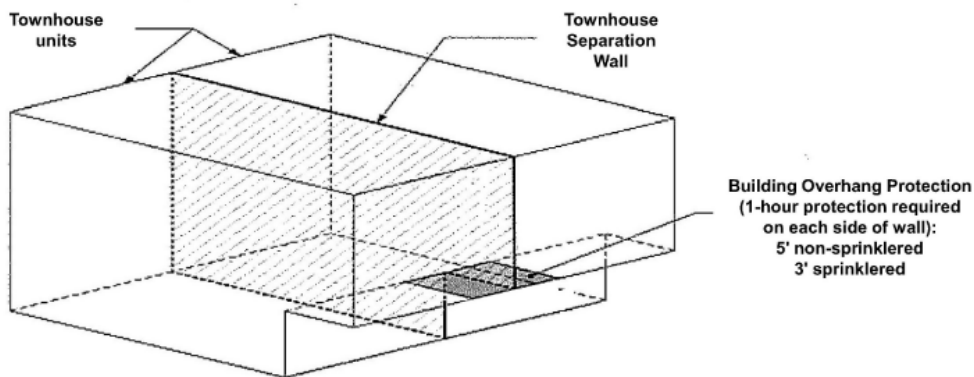
SRC Figure R302.2(1) can be used when the townhouse separation wall extends to the face of the building overhang above.



[W] FIGURE R302.2(1)
EXTENDED TOWNHOUSE SEPARATION WALL

SRC Figure R302.2(2) can be used when all of the following conditions exist:

- The townhouse separation wall extends to the face of the building overhang above.
- Any story or stories below the building overhang shown in Figure R302.2(2) does not extend beyond the exterior wall of the story directly below the overhang.
- There are no facing walls under the building overhang.



[W] FIGURE R302.2(2)
TOWNHOUSE SEPARATION OVERHANG PROTECTION

For locations where SRC Figures R302.2(1) and R302.2(2) cannot be used, compliance with Items 2 and 3 below are required.

Item 2: Imaginary Line

Where the townhouse units have unenclosed floor area or projections that are directly adjacent to each other or where townhouse units have enclosed floor area or projections that are not directly adjacent to each other, provide one of the following (refer to Figure 1):

- Option 1: Extend the wall separating the townhouse units to the edge of any floor area or projection; or
- Option 2: Locate an imaginary line separating the townhouse units. Then apply SRC Table R302.1(2) provisions for wall protection, opening limitations, and projection protection relative to the imaginary line. See Item 3 below for guidance on when strict compliance with SRC Table R302.1(2) is not required relative to the imaginary line. Option 2 cannot be used where there is enclosed floor area below unenclosed floor area.

The location of the imaginary line shall be as follows:

- Where the floor area or projections are not directly adjacent to each other, the line may be located anywhere between the townhouse units or at the exterior wall of one unit. The line may jog horizontally but not vertically.
- Where the townhouse units have unenclosed floor area or projections that are directly adjacent to each other, the line must be contiguous with the fire-resistance rated wall or assembly separating the townhouse units both horizontally and vertically.

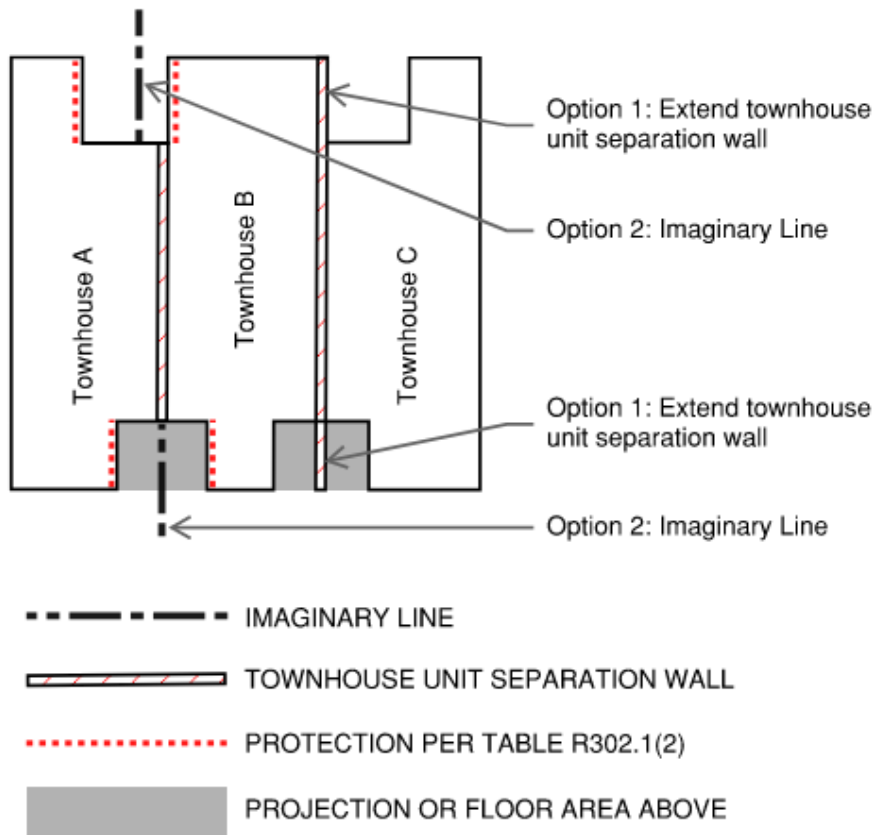


Figure 1: Plan

Item 3: Where Strict Compliance with SRC Table R302.1(2) is Not Required Relative to the Imaginary Line

There are three locations where strict compliance with SRC Table R302.1(2) is not required relative to the imaginary line. They are described in more detail below, but are as follows:

- Unenclosed floor area
- Projections
- Noncombustible Projections

Unenclosed Floor Area:

All floor area, whether provided with exterior walls (enclosed) or not (unenclosed), is required to meet the exterior wall protection and limited openings per SRC Table R302.1(2) to both the line used to determine fire separation distance and to the imaginary line separating townhouse units.

However, when the unenclosed floor area (such as at covered balconies, covered decks, and covered alcoves) is 6 feet deep or less, SDCI allows a reduction in the required protection relative to the imaginary line between townhouse units. At these locations, a rated wall is not required at the imaginary line where the underside of the projection or exposed floor-ceiling assembly above is protected as required for projections in SRC Table R302.1(2) and as described in this code solution. Refer to Figure 2. Any walls surrounding enclosed floor area still need to comply with SRC Table R302.1(2) relative to the imaginary line.

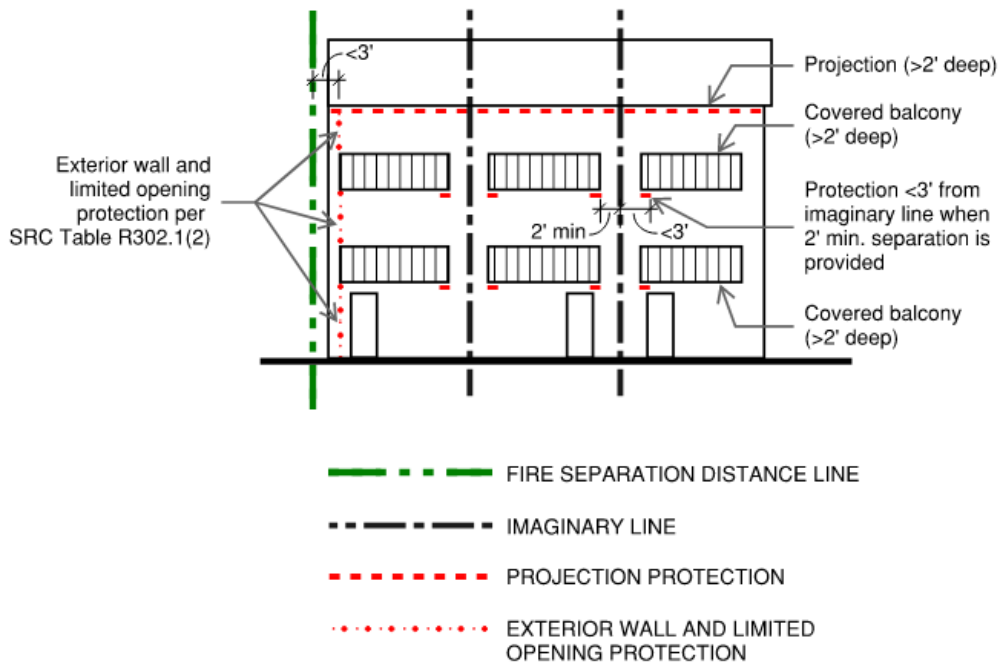


Figure 2: Elevation

This reduced protection does not apply to unenclosed floor area relative to the line used to determine fire separation distance.

Projections:

SRC Table R302.1(2) does not allow projections with less than 2 feet of fire separation distance.

However, SDCI allows projections to extend to the imaginary line separating townhouse units when they comply with one of the following (refer to Figure 3):

- Eaves that are no more than 2 feet deep and are provided with ½" gypsum sheathing applied to the underside for 3 feet on each side of the imaginary line; or
- All other projections that are provided with 1-hour projection protection applied to the entire underside of the projection.

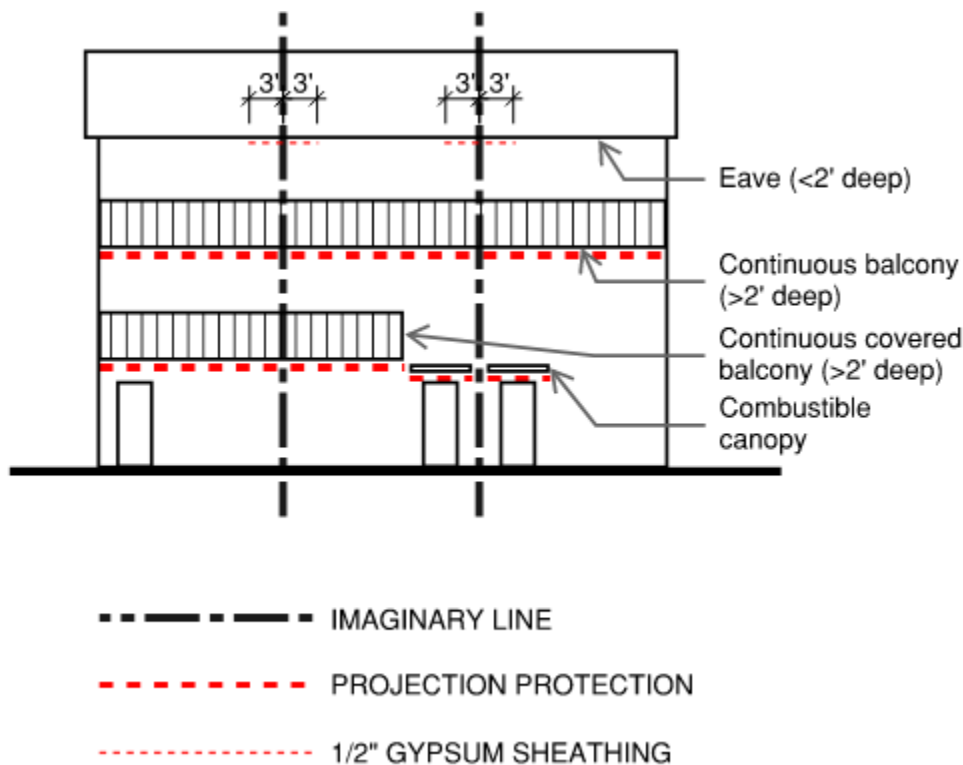


Figure 3: Elevation

Noncombustible Projections:

Where projection protection is required in relation to the imaginary line between townhouse units, SDCI will waive the required projection protection for any of the following:

- Non-combustible projection located 2 feet or more from the imaginary line.
- Non-combustible canopy located anywhere up to the imaginary line.

- The maximum canopy size is one 3'x5' canopy per townhouse unit.
- The maximum number of adjacent canopies is two.
- Non-combustible projection (<2' deep) located anywhere up to the imaginary line.
- Non-combustible projections that meet SBC CA705.2 located anywhere up to the imaginary line.

For questions about whether this code solution applies to your project:

- *If you have submitted a permit application, contact the Building Code plan reviewer assigned to your application*
- *If you have not submitted an application, send us a question through the SDCI website www.seattle.gov/sdci/resources/send-us-a-question or in person at the Applicant Services Center. Visit the Applicant Services Center website for more information about hours and location www.seattle.gov/sdci/about-us/who-we-are*