POLICY NUMBER:  16

1st REVISION & APPROVAL DATE:  May 8, 2014

ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE:  March 11, 2010

SUBJECT:  CLEARANCE AND PROTECTION AGAINST DECAY AND
TERMITES OF WOOD FLOOR FRAMING MEMBERS AND UNDER FLOOR
VENTILATION IN CRAWL SPACES IN ROOM ADDITION AND/OR REMODEL
AND GARAGE CONVERSION

This guideline is developed by the Tri-chapter Uniform Code Committee and is intended
to enhance regional consistency in application and enforcement of the Building Code.
Please verify acceptance of this guideline with your local building department prior to its
application.

CODE REFERENCE (S):
The 2013 California Building Code (CBC) Section 2304.11.2.1 & 2013 California
Residential Code (CRC) Section R317.1 require that where wood joists or the bottom of a
wood structural floor without joists are closer than 18 inches, or wood girders are closer
than 12 inches to the exposed ground in crawl spaces or unexcavated areas located within
the perimeter of the building foundation, the floor assembly (including posts, girders,
joists and subfloor) shall be of naturally durable or preservative-treated wood.

CBC Section 1203.3 and CRC Section R408 requires that minimum underfloor
ventilation be provided in the crawl space.

ISSUE (S):
The code does not address the situation when the crawl space clearance is not sufficient
and no naturally durable or preservative treated wood is used in room addition and/or
remodel of existing structure. This guideline provides an alternative to using naturally
durable or preservative treated wood.

The code does not address the alternative when the minimum underfloor ventilation may
not be provided in the raised floor of a garage conversion. This guideline provides an
alternative when the minimum underfloor ventilation cannot be met in the garage
conversion.
GUIDELINE/INTERPRETATION:

1. In room addition and/or remodel of existing structure, where bottom of wood joists are closer than 18”, or wood girders are closer than 12”, to the exposed ground or unexcavated areas located within the perimeter of the building foundation, the exposed ground or unexcavated area within the perimeter of the building foundation must be covered with a concrete slab at least three inches in thickness. The minimum under floor ventilation as required by CBC Section 1203.3 or CRC Section R408 shall still be met. *

2. In garage conversion, where the minimum under floor ventilation as required by CBC Section 1203.3 or CRC Section R408 cannot be provided under the raised floor, Class I vapor retarder shall be placed above the existing concrete slab and voids filled with fiberglass bat insulation. Wood sleepers and sill plates in contact with concrete floor shall be naturally durable or preservative-treated wood.

3. All plumbing cleanouts shall be accessible from outside the area of reduced underfloor clearance. (conditions 1 & 2 above)

* Note: Reduced ventilation 1/1500 is permitted per exception under CBC Section 1203.3 and CRC Section R408 when ground surface is covered with an approved vapor retarder.