



<b>Issue Date:</b>	October 24, 2014
<b>Code/Section:</b>	2012 International Building Code (IBC) Sections 110.3.4 and 2508.2, 2011 National Electrical Code Section 334.12(B)(4)
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**Issue:**

Developers have requested exterior rough wall inspections to be completed prior to lath being stapled or secured to the exterior framing members. There have been substantial code violations witnessed where lath staples and or nails have penetrated electrical conductors and plumbing installations causing substantial damage. The damage would not be evident if the exterior rough walls were passed and covered prior to the lath being approved. A structural inspection shall approve the lath before the interior of the exterior wall will be approved to cover with insulation and drywall in both the commercial and residential setting.

**Interpretation:**

1. The IBC 110.3.4 states:
  - a. *“Framing inspections shall be made after the roof deck or sheathing, all framing, fire blocking and bracing are in place and pipes, chimneys and vents to be concealed are complete and the rough electrical, plumbing, heating wires, pipes and ducts are approved.”*
  - b. The rough walls inspection will not be inspected until the lath is complete and approved.
2. IBC 2508.2 Limitations  
Gypsum wallboard or gypsum plaster shall not be in any exterior surface where such gypsum construction will be exposed directly to the weather. Gypsum shall not be used where there will be direct exposure to water or continuous humidity conditions. Gypsum sheathing shall be installed on exterior surfaces in accordance with ASTM C 1280.

**Justification:**

1. General – It is impossible for the proper inspection to take place and verify proper installation of all building disciplines and that there is no damage to electrical, plumbing/mechanical, or structural components once the exterior walls have been encapsulated or insulated prior to the lath being completed.
2. Electrical – There have been multiple documented cases where the lath staples have penetrated the insulation of electrical conductors causing fires or energizing the lath. This includes projects that were using stand offs as well as 2x6 construction. The NEC article 334.12(B)(4) states NM shall not be installed in a wet or damp location. If the exterior of the building is not weatherized the exterior walls would be considered a damp location.
3. Structural – The structural inspectors need to verify that the lath staples are secured into the framing members and not the outside plywood or substrate. The vapor barrier also needs to be verified prior to being encapsulated in drywall, insulation or other interior coverings.
4. Plumbing and Mechanical – Staples can penetrate dryer ducts and cause lint blockages, resulting in fires and/or damage to appliances. Lath staples can also penetrate supply and drainage piping. They are hot when penetrating the pipe and seal until they rust out or water pressure periodically increases causing damage and potential for mold growth.

**Conclusion:**

After reviewing national requirements and standard construction processes, the City of Phoenix Planning and Development Department Inspections Division will not perform rough wall inspections on exterior walls prior to the complete installation of exterior lath or sheathing on residential or commercial projects.