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**Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections
Code Bulletin – Interpretation**

Applicable Code Section(s): 2009 IRC R202, R302.2	Interpretation#: IRC-R202-2016.5.21
Subject: Definition of Townhouse - Attached	BCO: Erik Harless Date: 5/21/2016

Subject of Interpretation:

A Townhouse is defined under the IRC as: "A single-family *dwelling unit* constructed in a group of three or more attached units in which each unit extends from foundation to roof and with a *yard* or public way on at least two sides."

Question: What determines when a townhouse is 'attached' to the other units of the group?

Interpretation:

Under *IRC R302.2 Townhouses*, each townhouse is considered a separate building and each townhouse is to be separated by fire-resistance-rated exterior wall assemblies. A shared common wall is a recognized exception, but otherwise each townhouse is required to have its own independent exterior walls.

IRC R302.2.4 further requires that each individual townhouse be structurally independent, with limited exceptions permitted. Non-structural components, such as roof or wall coverings and flashings, are listed as exceptions to the base code requirement of structural independence.

Since each townhouse must be considered a separate, structurally independent building, with limited exceptions, the term 'attached' within the definition, cannot then require that units be structurally attached in order to be defined as townhouses.

It is clear that the intent of the identification as a townhouse in the code is due to the unique hazards to single-family dwelling units when configured in a row with other buildings, and is not dependent on any particular method of attachment.

Therefore, single-family dwelling units constructed under the IRC will be considered as 'attached' when its exterior wall, or components of exterior cladding or roofing, are constructed to abut the exterior wall, cladding, or roofing of an adjoining structure.