

**OREGON**  
**Interpretive Ruling 93-39**  
**GARAGE FLOOR SURFACES**  
**(revised 11-01-00, editorial only)**

**REQUESTED BY:** PPPI Manual Review Committee

**QUESTION:** Interpretation of what is acceptable garage or carport floor surface.

- 1 Can a gravel or dirt floor surface be used in a Group S, Division 3 occupancy?
- 2 Can we use gravel or dirt floor surfacing in a private garage or carport under 1,000 sq.ft. in area? (Group U, Division 1 occupancy)?

**APPLICABLE CODE SECTIONS:** Oregon Structural Specialty Code (*OSSC*), Section 311.2 and One and Two Family Dwelling Specialty Code (*Dwelling Code*), Section 309.3.

**BACKGROUND:** Even though terminology relating to service stations and repair garages has changed since PPPI-4014 was approved, the provisions of the codes remain unchanged. The intent of the code is to prevent fuel, oil, transmission fluid, etc. from saturating the floor and creating a potentially hazardous situation.

Repair and fuel-dispensing facilities present the greatest potential for spills with storage areas presenting a lesser hazard. Private residential garages and carports also present a minimal hazard.

**FINDINGS:** *OSSC*, Section 311.2.3.1, Group S, Division 3 Occupancy, states in part:

In areas where motor vehicles, boats or aircraft are stored, and in motor vehicle fuel-dispensing stations....., floor surfaces shall be of noncombustible, nonabsorbent materials. Floors shall drain to an approved oil separator or trap discharging to sewers in accordance with the Plumbing Code.

**Exceptions:** Floors may be surfaced or waterproofed with asphaltic paving materials in areas where motor vehicles or airplanes are stored or operated.

and *Dwelling Code*;

**309.3 Floor surface:** Garage and carport floor surfaces shall be of approved noncombustible material. That area of floor used for parking of automobiles or other vehicles shall be sloped to facilitate the movement of liquids to a drain or toward the main vehicle entry doorway.

This interpretation is authorized by ORS 455.060. Rulings on Acceptability of Materials, Designs or Methods of Construction and Attorney General's Opinion OP-5208 issued October 1, 1981, which advised the statute permits authoritative interpretations of existing code requirements.

**DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION:** The board has concluded that the following criteria applies to occupancies housing motor vehicles, boats, or aircraft:

- 1 Floor surfaces in Group S, Division 3 motor vehicle fuel-dispensing stations and repair garages shall be of noncombustible, nonabsorbent materials.
- 2 Group S, Division 3 occupancies used exclusively for storage or operation of motor vehicles or aircraft may be of asphaltic paving materials, but shall not be of mineral soil.
- 3 Garages or carports in Group U, Division 1 occupancies are not required to be nonabsorbent, but must be noncombustible. Any material which is noncombustible will comply, including mineral soil.

(signed September 28, 1993)  
John Talbott, Chairman  
Structural Code Advisory Board

The recommendations and findings of the Structural Code Advisory Board are accepted and the conclusions are adopted.

(signed October 1, 1993)  
Gary J. Wicks, Administrator  
Building Codes Agency