

**Oregon  
Interpretive Ruling No. 93-78  
FLOOR VAPOR BARRIER INSTALLATION**

**Requested By:** PPPI MANUAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

**QUESTION**

Interpretation of acceptable vapor barriers in floors. Four figures are presented, with a request that each be addressed. These figures are attached.

**APPLICABLE CODE SECTIONS**

1993 Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC), Section 5303(f)4 and One and Two Family Dwelling Specialty Code (Dwelling Code), Section 5303(f)4.

**BACKGROUND**

Figure 1 utilizes the plywood subfloor as the vapor barrier. Nearly all plywood used for subfloors is made with exterior grade glue. Two layers or more of exterior grade plywood glue will meet the 1.0 perm rating requirement. Other structural material such as oriented strand board may have a perm rating of 1.0 or less. Unfaced insulation may be used.

Figure 2 has separate sheeting material installed between the wood decking subfloor and underlayment. Unfaced insulation may be used.

Figure 3 has a vapor barrier as an integral part of the insulation as kraft, foil or vinyl facing. Using the stapling flange to keep the insulation in place, either inset or face-stapled, is not acceptable.

The vapor barrier in Figure 4 is sheeting that is either placed on top of the beams or joists, or in between them on top of the insulation, in contact with both the subfloor and insulation. Use of faced (vapor barrier) insulation is also acceptable in Figures 1,2, and 4 but considered unnecessary.

**FINDINGS**

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 AND CONCLUSION**

The Structural Code Advisory Board rules Figures 1 through 4 are acceptable alternate methods. All four figures (1, 2, 3 and 4) comply with Section 5303(f)4 requirements. The vapor barrier must have a perm rating off 1.0 and be installed on the warm side (in the winter) of the insulation. The barrier can be a separate component or attached to the insulation. Floor insulation must kept in place with adequate supports. Interpretive Ruling 93-78 replaces PPPI-4071.

(signed November 17, 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 November 19.1993)

Gary Wicks, Administrator

Building Codes Division

RESCINDED