9/9/25:

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY

CODE CHANGE PROPOSAL FORM

(Must be submitted electronically)

Author/requestor: Staff

Date: 08/27/2025

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Model Code: 2024 IMC

Telephone number: 651-284-5510

Code or Rule Section: R408.3

Firm/Association affiliation, if any: DLI

Code or rule section to be changed: IRC 408.3 Unvented crawl space

Intended for Technical Advisory Group ("TAG"): IRC Chapter 1309

General Information	**Yes**	**No**
A. Is the proposed change unique to the State of Minnesota?	☐	☒
B. Is the proposed change required due to climatic conditions of Minnesota?	☐	☒
C. Will the proposed change encourage more uniform enforcement?	☒	☐
D. Will the proposed change remedy a problem?	☒	☐
E. Does the proposal delete a current Minnesota Rule, chapter amendment?	☐	☒
F. Would this proposed change be appropriate through the ICC code development process?	☒	☐

Proposed Language

1. The proposed code change is meant to:

   ☒ change language contained the model code book? If so, list section(s).
   IRC 408.3 Unvented crawl space

   ☐ change language contained in an existing amendment in Minnesota Rule? If so, list Rule part(s).

   ☐ delete language contained in the model code book? If so, list section(s).

   ☐ delete language contained in an existing amendment in Minnesota Rule? If so, list Rule part(s).

   ☐ add new language that is not found in the model code book or in Minnesota Rule.

2. Is this proposed code change required by Minnesota Statute? If so, please provide the citation.
   No

3. Provide *specific* language you would like to see changed. Indicate proposed new words with underlining and ~~strikethrough~~ words proposed for deletion. Include the entire code (sub) section or rule subpart that contains your proposed changes.

   R408.3 Unvented crawl space. For unvented under-floor spaces, the following items shall be provided:
   1. Exposed earth shall be covered with a continuous Class I vapor retarder. Joints of the vapor retarder shall overlap by 6 inches (152 mm) and shall be sealed or taped. The edges of the vapor retarder shall extend not less than 6 inches (152 mm) up the stem wall and shall be attached and sealed to the stem wall or insulation.
   2. One of the following shall be provided for the under-floor space:
   2.1. Continuously operated mechanical exhaust ventilation at a rate equal to 1 cubic foot per minute (0.47 L/s) for each 50 square feet (4.7 m2) of crawl space floor area, including an air pathway to the common area (such as a duct or transfer grille), and perimeter walls insulated in accordance with Section N1102.2.11.1.
   2.2. Conditioned air supply sized to deliver at a rate equal to 1 cubic foot per minute (0.47 L/s) for each 50 square feet (4.7 m2) of under-floor area, including a ~~return air~~ pathway to the common area (such as a ~~duct or~~ transfer grille), and perimeter walls insulated in accordance with Section N1102.2.11.1.
   2.3. Plenum in existing structures complying with Section M1601.5, if under-floor space is used as a plenum.
   2.4. Dehumidification sized in accordance with manufacturer's specifications.

4. Will this proposed code change impact other sections of a model code book or an amendment in Minnesota Rule? If so, please list the affected sections or rule parts.

Need and Reason

1. Why is the proposed code change needed? Please provide a general explanation as well as a specific explanation for any changes to numerical values (heights, area, etc.)

   Return air ducts are not allowed in hazardous or unsanitary locations as referenced in 1602.2 Item 9. Unvented crawlspaces are uncommon in Minnesota, but this could be an issue if one is constructed.

   M1602.2 Return air openings. Return air openings for heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems shall comply with all of the following:
   1. Openings shall not be located less than 10 feet (3048 mm) measured in any direction from an open combustion chamber or draft hood of another appliance located in the same room or space.
   2. The amount of return air taken from any room or space except mechanical rooms, boiler rooms or furnace rooms shall be not greater than the flow rate of supply air delivered to such room or space. Return air taken from mechanical rooms, boiler rooms or furnace rooms shall serve only the mechanical room and shall be permitted to be taken from mechanical rooms that have no dedicated supply duct.
   3. Return and transfer openings shall be sized in accordance with the appliance or equipment manufacturer's installation instructions, Manual D or the design of the registered design professional.
   4. Where return air is taken from a mechanical room, boiler room or furnace room with combustion appliances, only sealed combustion appliances shall be permitted within the mechanical room.
   5. Where return air is taken from a mechanical room, boiler room or furnace room, the pressure differential across the mechanical room, boiler room or furnace room door shall be limited to 0.01 inch wc (2.5 pascals) or less by undercutting the door, or installing a louvered door or transfer grille, or by some other means.

6. Where return air is taken from a closet, the return air shall be not more than 30 cubic feet per minute (15 l/s), shall serve only the closet and shall not require a dedicated supply duct, and the closet door shall be undercut not less than 1.5 inches (38 mm) or the closet shall include a louvered door or transfer grille with a net free area of not less than 30 square inches (194 cm2).
7. Return air shall not be taken from a closet, toilet room, kitchen, garage, or unconditioned attic.
Exceptions:
1. Taking return air from a kitchen is not prohibited where such return air openings serve the kitchen only, and are located not less than 10 feet (3048 mm) from the cooking appliances.
2. Dedicated forced-air systems serving only the garage shall not be prohibited from obtaining return air from the garage.
3. Return air taken from closets shall serve only the closet and shall be permitted to be taken from closets that have no dedicated supply duct.
8. For other than dedicated HVAC systems, return air shall not be taken from indoor swimming pool enclosures and associated deck areas except where the air in such spaces is dehumidified.
9. Taking return air from an unconditioned crawl space shall not be accomplished through a direct connection to the return side of a forced-air furnace. Transfer openings in the crawl space enclosure shall not be prohibited.
10. Return air from one dwelling unit shall not be discharged into another dwelling unit.

2. Why is the proposed code change a reasonable solution?

   Provides clarity to match the IRC mechanical provisions with the building provisions..

3. What other factors should the TAG consider?

Cost/Benefit Analysis

1. Will the proposed code change increase or decrease costs? Please explain and provide estimates if possible.

   None

2. If there is an increased cost, will this cost be offset by a safety or other benefit? Please explain. If the benefit is quantifiable (for example energy savings), provide an estimate if possible.

   None

3. If there is a cost increase, who will bear the costs? This can include government units, businesses, and individuals.

   None

4. Are there any enforcement or compliance cost increases or decreases with the proposed code change? Please explain.

   None

5. Will the cost of complying with the proposed code change in the first year after the rule takes effect exceed $25,000 for any one small business or small city (Minn. Stat. § 14.127)? A small business is any business that has less than 50 full-time employees. A small city is any statutory or home rule charter city that has less than ten full-time employees. Please explain.

Regulatory Analysis

1. What parties or segments of industry are affected by this proposed code change?

   Contractors, building owners, and enforcement individuals

2. Can you think of other means or methods to achieve the purpose of the proposed code change? What might someone opposed to this code change suggest instead? Please explain what the alternatives are and why your proposed change is the preferred method or means to achieve the desired result.

3. What are the probable costs or consequences of not adopting the code change, including those costs or consequences borne by identifiable categories of affected parties, such as separate classes of government units, businesses, or individuals?

4. Are you aware of any federal or state regulation or requirement related to this proposed code change? If so, please list the federal or state regulation or requirement and your assessment of any differences between the proposed code change and the federal regulation or requirement.

***Note: Incomplete forms may be returned to the submitter with instruction to complete the form. Only completed forms can considered by the TAG.