

U.S. Fire Administration / National Fire Academy

*Coffee Break Training***Topic: Part VI: Inspecting Modular Construction**

Learning objective: The student shall be able to identify the particular components or items that should be covered during the inspection of a modular building installation.

Modular buildings typically are inspected at the factory by a third-party inspection agency. These independent agencies provide certifications and/or certificates to the local code official when the building is delivered to the site. When this is provided, there is no need for local inspectors to perform “rough-work” inspections or to look behind finished walls—this has all been done by the third-party inspector who attests to the proper completion of the work.

Local inspectors are responsible for inspecting foundations and site work, utility installation and connections, and the final assembly of the structure. Most recognized third-party inspection agencies are certified and recognized by the Federal and State governments to provide in-plant inspection and design approval.

Modular buildings may have large concealed void spaces in the walls between modules. There also will be a large interstitial space between each story. In each case, the inspector should verify compliance with the draftstopping and fireblocking requirements in the code.

- Draftstopping is required in the void space between the floor above and the ceiling below if the area of the space exceeds 1,000 square feet.
- In one- and two-family dwelling units, fireblocking should be provided where vents, pipes, ducts, cables, and wires pass through a floor level—at both the upper side of the lower module, and the under side of the upper module. These can be inspected visually before the modules are assembled.
- For buildings other than one- and two-family dwelling units both draftstopping and fireblocking requirements are found in the locally adopted building code.

Penetrations of fire-resistance-rated walls and/or floors are always a cause for concern. Note the presence of rated walls and floor/ceiling assemblies on the plans, and pay particular attention to these during inspections. These penetrations should be protected with listed through-penetration firestop systems such as caulk or pillows.

The inspector must check all the draftstopping and firestopping.