

**NC Department of Insurance  
Office of the State Fire Marshal – Engineering Division  
1202 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1202  
919-647-0000**

**Canopy Area and Separation**

**Code:** 2018 NC Building Code  
**Section:** 3105 Awnings and Canopies

**Date:** September 13, 2018

**Question 1:**

Fire area and building area of canopies:

- a. When a canopy in accordance with Section 3105.5 of the 2018 NC Building Code is constructed adjacent to an existing Group A occupancy for the purpose of providing extended assembly space, does the area below the canopy contribute to the Fire Area and Building Area of the building?
- b. Do canopies for other occupancies or uses contribute to the Fire Area and Building Area?

**Answer 1:**

- a. Canopies that have an occupant load or fuel load under them should be the same construction type as the building and also be considered part of the building and fire area.
- b. The intent of Section 3105 is to allow an open-sided roof cover, primarily for pedestrian use, to be attached to a building without adding to the building and fire area.

**Question 2:**

Are the sides of the area beneath a canopy required to comply with the requirements for exterior walls in proximity to the fire separation distance in accordance with NCBC Section 705?

**Answer 2:**

Yes. The open sides of such canopies are considered “openings” just as the open sides of a building or shed are considered openings. If the hanging material on the sides is not required for lateral stability of the structure, then they can be considered openings and must comply with Section 705.8. If the new hanging walls require an opening rating, then the openings should have been rated before the fabric was installed.

**Question 3:**

If an open side of a canopy is enclosed with a panel, membrane or curtain, flexible or rigid, fixed or operable, seasonal or permanent, then is it still considered “open” in accordance with Section 3105.5, Item 3?

**Answer 3:**

No. The intent of Section 3105 is to allow an open-sided roof cover, primarily for pedestrian use, to be attached to a building without increasing the building area. One long side must be open.

