

**NC Department of Insurance  
Office of the State Fire Marshal - Engineering Division  
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**Make-up Ventilation Air Source Requirements**

**Code:** 2012 Mechanical Code

**Date:** March 18, 2019

**Section:** 403.2

**Question:**

Does the Mechanical Code allow required make-up ventilation air to be obtained from an attic or crawl space?

**Answer:**

No, Section 402.1, 403.2, and 403.3 address the requirements for Outdoor air. The Chapter 2 definitions contain definitions for the following pertinent words:

Outdoor Air. Air taken from the outdoors, and therefore not previously circulated through the system

Outdoor Opening. A door, window, louver or skylight openable to the outdoor atmosphere.

By these definitions, and no other language in 401.4 allowing ventilation openings to the attic or crawl spaces, it is this interpretation that outdoor air is not to be taken from an attic or crawl space. Openings into the attic or crawl space are not opening to the atmosphere. Ductwork could pass through the attic or crawl space to connect to openings on the exterior of the building, but these openings cannot open into the attic or crawl space.

There are provisions, with limitations, for taking **combustion** air for appliances from attics or crawl spaces. See Sections R316.4, to ensure any required thermal barrier separating living space from attic space is not breached by an unallowed opening, and section 304.6 Outdoor Combustion Air of the 2018 NCFGC.

**Keywords:**

Required outdoor ventilation air