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## Code Interpretation 2007 - 01

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Code Effective Date: January 1, 2003

Source Document: 19NYCRR 1220 - Residential Code of New York State

Background: Residential Code of New York State (RCNYS) section 807 states:  
In buildings with combustible ceiling or roof construction, an attic access opening shall be provided to attic areas that exceed 30 square feet (2.8 m<sup>2</sup>) and have a vertical height of 30 inches (762 mm) or greater.

The rough-framed opening shall not be less than 22 inches by 30 inches (559 mm by 762 mm) and shall be located in a hallway or other readily accessible location. A 30-inch (762 mm) minimum unobstructed headroom in the attic space shall be provided at some point above the access opening.

Question: Is the attic access opening required to have clear floor space below?

Interpretation:

NO. The attic access opening can be in a clothes closet, a bathroom closet or "other readily accessible location" provided that the access opening is not be less than 22 inches by 30 inches and has the required ceiling height above the opening. The purpose of the attic access opening is predicated on the likelihood that during the life of the structure, access to an attic space for repair or extension of electrical systems will be required. The clothes rod and/or shelves are easily removed if there is a need to get into the attic. An attic with an attic access opening in a closet may still be used for storage if the owner desires. An attic access opening can even have a piece of furniture placed below it. If, however, the attic contains mechanical equipment, RCNYS section M1305.1.3 is applicable.

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