



# NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Division of Code Enforcement and Administration  
Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code - 2002 Edition

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## TECHNICAL BULLETIN

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**Effective Date:** January 1, 2003

**Source Document:** 19 NYCRR 1220, Residential Code of New York State (RCNYS)

**Code section:** R302.1 Exterior walls (Location On Lot)

**Question:** What is the minimum distance between the exterior walls of two buildings on a single lot, such as a dwelling and an unattached garage, where un-rated wall construction and facing door and window openings can be used?

**Answer:** 6 feet.

Section R302.1 requires exterior walls that have a **fire separation distance** less than 3 feet to have at least a 1-hour fire-resistance rating and no openings. **Fire separation distance** is defined in section R202 as *...the distance measured from the building face to the closest interior lot line, to the centerline of a street, alley or public way, or to an imaginary line between two buildings on the property.* Since Section 302.1 establishes the fire separation distance as 3 feet, and there is normally no lot line between a dwelling and attached garage, the distance to an imaginary line would have to be 3 feet from each wall for unrated construction to be permitted.

Connecting a garage and breezeway with any manor of enclosure would create a single building. Since the **fire separation distance** only applies to separate buildings, it would not apply to a fully or partially enclosed breezeway. However, in accordance with section R309.2, the garage and residence must be separated either horizontally or vertically with rated construction, or appropriately attached type-x gypsum board. Care must be taken to be sure that the prescribed fire separation between the residence and garage is not compromised with the breezeway roof construction.