

PLUMBING AND MECHANICAL  
INTERPRETATION MANUAL



CODE: 2003 IRC

DATE:

CODE REF: Section M1305.1.3

3/31/2004

SUBJECT: Access to Equipment

**Question:** If a furnace or air-handling unit is installed in the space above a lay-in or drop-in ceiling, does Section M1305.1.3 "Attic Furnace" apply?

**Section 1305.1.3 requires** a catwalk, access, work platform, electric outlet and light. The context of this provision of the IRC indicates that this section of the code refers to an attic space which is an area created between a *permanent ceiling* and the roof of the structure, not a space above a drop in ceiling.

Additionally, note the exception in Section 1303.1.3 of the IRC that states:

*Exception: A working platform need not be provided when the furnace can be serviced from the required access opening.*

The furnace or air-handler may be accessed through the lay-in or drop-in ceiling and the supporting grid assembly. The grid is not part of the permanent structure and may be easily removed for servicing or for the removal of the equipment.

Therefore, air-handling equipment installed in the area between a lay-in or drop in ceiling and upper floor or roof assemblies need not comply with Section 1303.1.3.

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