

Carports – fire separation

(December 2008) (First issue)

Question

Paragraphs 5.6 & 5.7 and Diagram 5.1 in Approved Document B Vol 1 (2019) (England & Wales) refers to separation between a house and a garage. Is the same standard of separation required between a house and a carport?

Considerations

- The guidance in Approved Document B Vol 1 (2019) paragraph 5.6 states 'if a domestic garage is attached to (or forms an integral part of) a house, the garage should be separated from the rest of the house, as shown in Diagram 5.1.
- Diagram 5.1 indicates that the wall and any floor between the garage and the house including any openings to have 30 minutes fire resistance and the floor to fall away from any connecting door to the outside, or in accordance with paragraph 5.7 be positioned 100mm above the garage floor level.
- The sloping floor or difference in floor level is to prevent any leakage of petrol into the dwelling.
- There is no definition of a carport or garage in the Building Regulations.
It would be reasonable to consider a covered space that if fully enclosed, and intended for the parking or storage of vehicles, as a garage where the provision of paragraph 5.6 & 5.7 and diagram 5.1 would apply.
- A covered space intended for the parking or storage of vehicles that is open on one or more sides represents a lesser risk of fire spread to the dwelling due to the venting of heat and smoke from the open side(s).

Answer

There is no definition of carport or garage in the Building Regulations.

A covered integral or attached space designated for the parking or storage of a vehicle may be either fully enclosed or open on one or more sides.

Where fully enclosed this space will be considered to be a garage and will require fire separation between the dwelling as described in paragraph 5.6 & 5.7 and diagram 5.1 of Approved Document B Vol 1 (2019).

Where open on one or more sides, the space will not be considered to be a garage and the additional separation measure described in paragraph 5.6 & 5.7 and diagram 5.1 of Approved Document B Vol 1 (2019) will not be applicable. Supporting lintels and any floor over would still require fire protection, as these are elements of the structure.