

**SECTION 603
DUCT CONSTRUCTION AND INSTALLATION**

603.1 General. An air distribution system shall be designed and installed to supply the required distribution of air. The installation of an air distribution system shall not affect the fire protection requirements specified in the *International Building Code*. Ducts shall be constructed, braced, reinforced and installed to provide structural strength and durability.

603.2 Duct sizing. Ducts installed within a single *dwelling unit* shall be sized in accordance with ACCA Manual D or other *approved* methods. Ducts installed within all other buildings shall be sized in accordance with the *ASHRAE Handbook of Fundamentals* or other equivalent computation procedure.

603.3 Duct classification. Ducts shall be classified based on the maximum operating pressure of the duct at pressures of positive or negative 0.5, 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0, 6.0 or 10.0 inches (1 inch w.c. = 248.7 Pa) of water column. The pressure classification of ducts shall equal or exceed the design pressure of the air distribution in which the ducts are utilized.

603.4 Metallic ducts. All metallic ducts shall be constructed as specified in the *SMACNA HVAC Duct Construction Standards—Metal and Flexible*.

Exception: Ducts installed within single *dwelling units* shall have a minimum thickness as specified in Table 603.4.

603.4.1 Minimum fasteners. Round metallic ducts shall be mechanically fastened by means of at least three sheet metal screws or rivets spaced equally around the joint.

Exception: Where a duct connection is made that is partially inaccessible, three screws or rivets shall be equally spaced on the exposed portion so as to prevent a hinge effect.

603.5 Nonmetallic ducts. Nonmetallic ducts shall be constructed with Class 0 or Class 1 duct material in accordance with UL 181. Fibrous duct construction shall conform to the *SMACNA Fibrous Glass Duct Construction Standards* or *NAIMA Fibrous Glass Duct Construction Standards*. The maximum air temperature within nonmetallic ducts shall not exceed 250°F (121°C).

603.5.1 Gypsum ducts. The use of gypsum boards to form air shafts (ducts) shall be limited to return air systems where the air temperatures do not exceed 125°F (52°C) and the

gypsum board surface temperature is maintained above the airstream dew-point temperature. Air ducts formed by gypsum boards shall not be incorporated in air-handling systems utilizing evaporative coolers.

603.6 Flexible air ducts and flexible air connectors. Flexible air ducts, both metallic and nonmetallic, shall comply with Sections 603.6.1, 603.6.1.1, 603.6.3 and 603.6.4. Flexible air connectors, both metallic and nonmetallic, shall comply with Sections 603.6.2 through 603.6.4.

603.6.1 Flexible air ducts. Flexible air ducts, both metallic and nonmetallic, shall be tested in accordance with UL 181. Such ducts shall be *listed* and *labeled* as Class 0 or Class 1 flexible air ducts and shall be installed in accordance with Section 304.1.

603.6.1.1 Duct length. Flexible air ducts shall not be limited in length.

603.6.2 Flexible air connectors. Flexible air connectors, both metallic and nonmetallic, shall be tested in accordance with UL 181. Such connectors shall be *listed* and *labeled* as Class 0 or Class 1 flexible air connectors and shall be installed in accordance with Section 304.1.

603.6.2.1 Connector length. Flexible air connectors shall be limited in length to 14 feet (4267 mm).

603.6.2.2 Connector penetration limitations. Flexible air connectors shall not pass through any wall, floor or ceiling.

603.6.3 Air temperature. The design temperature of air to be conveyed in flexible air ducts and flexible air connectors shall be less than 250°F (121°C).

603.6.4 Flexible air duct and air connector clearance. Flexible air ducts and air connectors shall be installed with a minimum *clearance* to an *appliance* as specified in the *appliance* manufacturer's installation instructions.

603.7 Rigid duct penetrations. Duct system penetrations of walls, floors, ceilings and roofs and air transfer openings in such building components shall be protected as required by Section 607. Ducts in a private garage and ducts penetrating the walls or ceilings separating a *dwelling* from a private garage shall be continuous and constructed of a minimum 26 gage [0.0187 inch (0.4712 mm)] galvanized sheet metal and shall not have openings into the garage. Fire and smoke dampers are

**TABLE 603.4
DUCT CONSTRUCTION MINIMUM SHEET METAL THICKNESSES FOR SINGLE DWELLING UNITS**

DUCT SIZE	GALVANIZED		ALUMINUM MINIMUM THICKNESS (in.)
	Minimum thickness (in.)	Equivalent galvanized gage no.	
Round ducts and enclosed rectangular ducts			
14 inches or less	0.0157	28	0.0175
16 and 18 inches	0.0187	26	0.018
20 inches and over	0.0236	24	0.023
Exposed rectangular ducts			
14 inches or less	0.0157	28	0.0175
Over 14 inches ^a	0.0187	26	0.018

For SI: 1 inch = 25.4 mm, 1 inch water gage = 249 Pa.

a. For duct gages and reinforcement requirements at static pressures of 1/2-inch, 1-inch and 2-inch w.g., *SMACNA HVAC Duct Construction Standards*, Tables 2-1, 2-2 and 2-3, shall apply.