



## 2018 SBC Code Interpretation

SBC 705.2, CA 705.2  
Regulation of Covered Balconies  
Release Date: 1/31/2022  
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The following interpretation, policy or code alternate is intended to provide guidance to staff for consistency of review and is subject to change without notice. Application of this interpretation, policy or code alternate to specific projects may vary.

### Code Issue:

Are covered balconies regulated as floor area or projections by the building code?  
What is the code impact of being considered floor area?

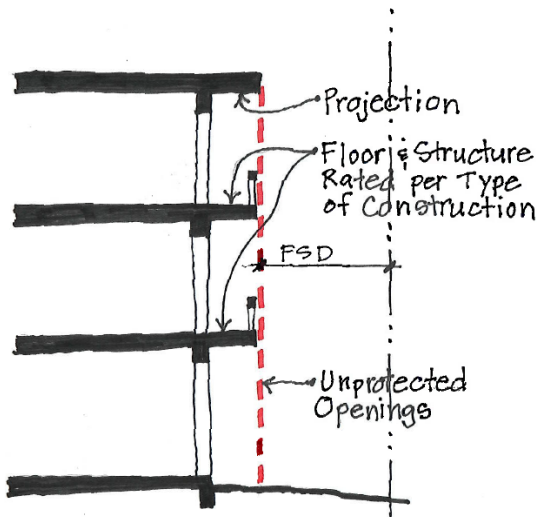
### Interpretation:

Covered balconies are treated as floor area, not projections. This interpretation is based on the definitions of gross floor area and building area which both stipulate that "areas of the building not provided with surrounding exterior walls...under the horizontal projection of the roof or floor or above" shall be included as part of the building area or floor area.

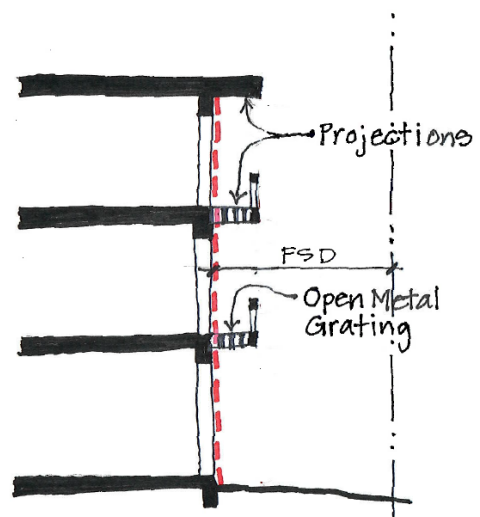
**Note:** All balconies, covered and uncovered, can be considered projections where they comply with Code Alternate CA 705.2.

Covered balconies being treated as floor area, must comply with the following:

- **Fire-resistance rating of floor and supporting structure:** Floor and supporting structure need to have fire-resistance rating as required by the Type of Construction.
- **Fire separation distance:** Fire separation distance is measured from the vertical plane at the outermost edge of the balcony.
- **Unprotected openings:** Open sides of balconies are considered unprotected openings and must conform to the allowable percentage of openings in Table 705.8.
- **Unit separation:** Unit Separation as required by SBC 420.2 must extend to the outermost edge of the balconies.



Covered Balconies with Solid Floors



Covered Balconies with Open Metal Grating per CA 705.2

For questions about whether this code solution applies to your project:

- If you have submitted a permit application, contact the Building Code plan reviewer assigned to your application
- If you have not submitted an application, send us a question through the SDCI website <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/toolsresources/sendusaquestion/default.htm> or in person at the Applicant Services Center. Visit the Applicant Services Center website for more information about hours and location <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/whoware/applicantservicescenter/default.htm>