



Issue Date:	December 15, 2021
Code/Section:	2018 IBC Section 510.2
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Issue: The 2018 IBC added vertical offsets to the specialized 3-hour horizontal assemblies of Section 510.2 that are typically referred to as "podiums". This introduction has spurred various applications and interpretations. This document describes the City's interpretations.

Scope: This set of interpretations only applies to designs under IBC Section 510.2 and does not apply to any other 510 subsections.

Interpretations:

1: Buildings above the podium horizontal assembly, and to the side of the horizontal assembly's vertical offsets, are the same building for all purposes unless those buildings above and to the side are separated from each other by *fire walls* or *exterior walls*. See Figure 1.

1.A: Where the buildings above and to the side are designed as separate buildings and separated by an *exterior wall* in lieu of a *fire wall* then there shall be an imaginary line between them in accordance with the definition of *fire separation distance*. See Fig 2.

2: Vertical offsets can extend all the way to the ground.

3: Vertical offsets can extend an unlimited number of stories.

4: The type 1A construction associated with the podium shall be present on at least one side of a horizontal assembly's vertical offset.

5: Continuity, openings, penetrations, and joints in a vertical offset shall be regulated as if the vertical offset is a 3-hour *fire barrier*.

Rationale and Reference:

The 2018 IBC brought in the vertical offset provision in code change G160-15 where the stated reason was to accommodate site elevation changes and different ceiling heights in a given story. When this interpretation was being developed various scenarios were considered, and in all those scenarios there was nothing less safe observed by allowing vertical offsets to extend multiple stories and all the way to the ground, so long as the buildings above and to the side were considered the same building, as their allowable areas, heights, and number of stories will control the design. Without code requirements to the contrary this therefore seems allowable.

The 2024 IBC will bring in direct acknowledgement of vertical offsets being *fire barriers* via code change proposal G130-21. With no code requirements applicable to these vertical offsets in the 2018 IBC they are not specifically prescribed so they are regulated under Section 104.11 as an alternative method where fire barriers were determined to be an appropriate level of protection.

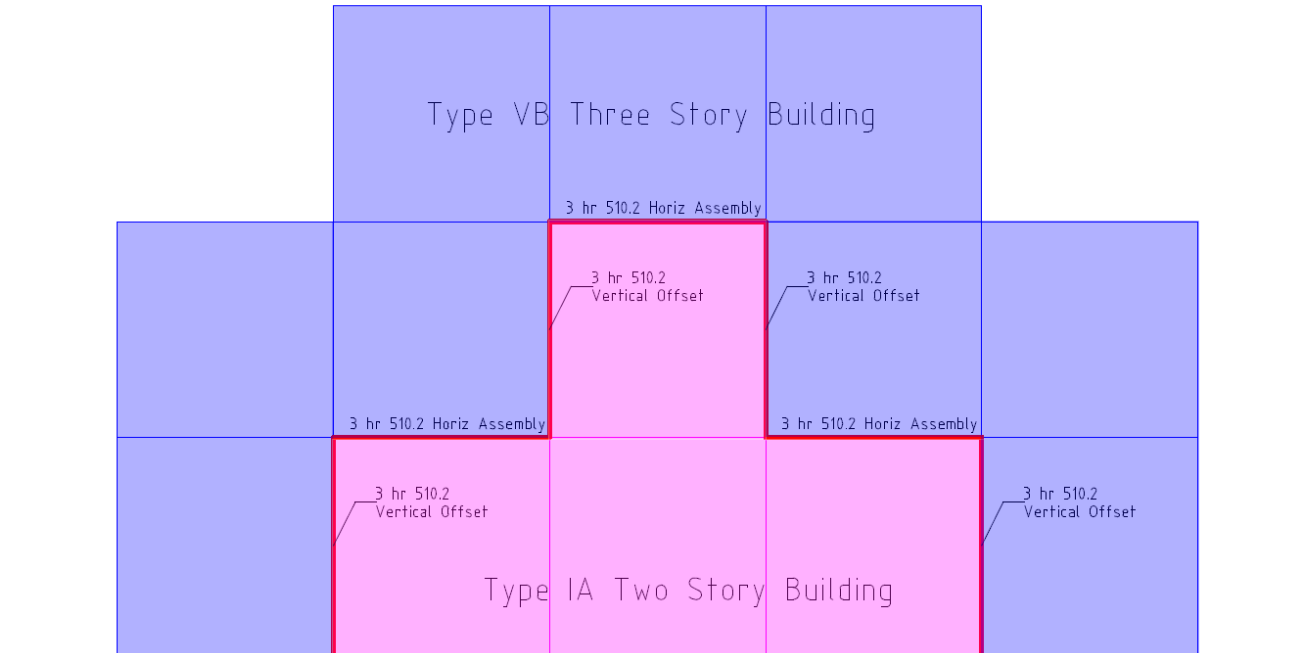


Figure 1. One building above the podium.

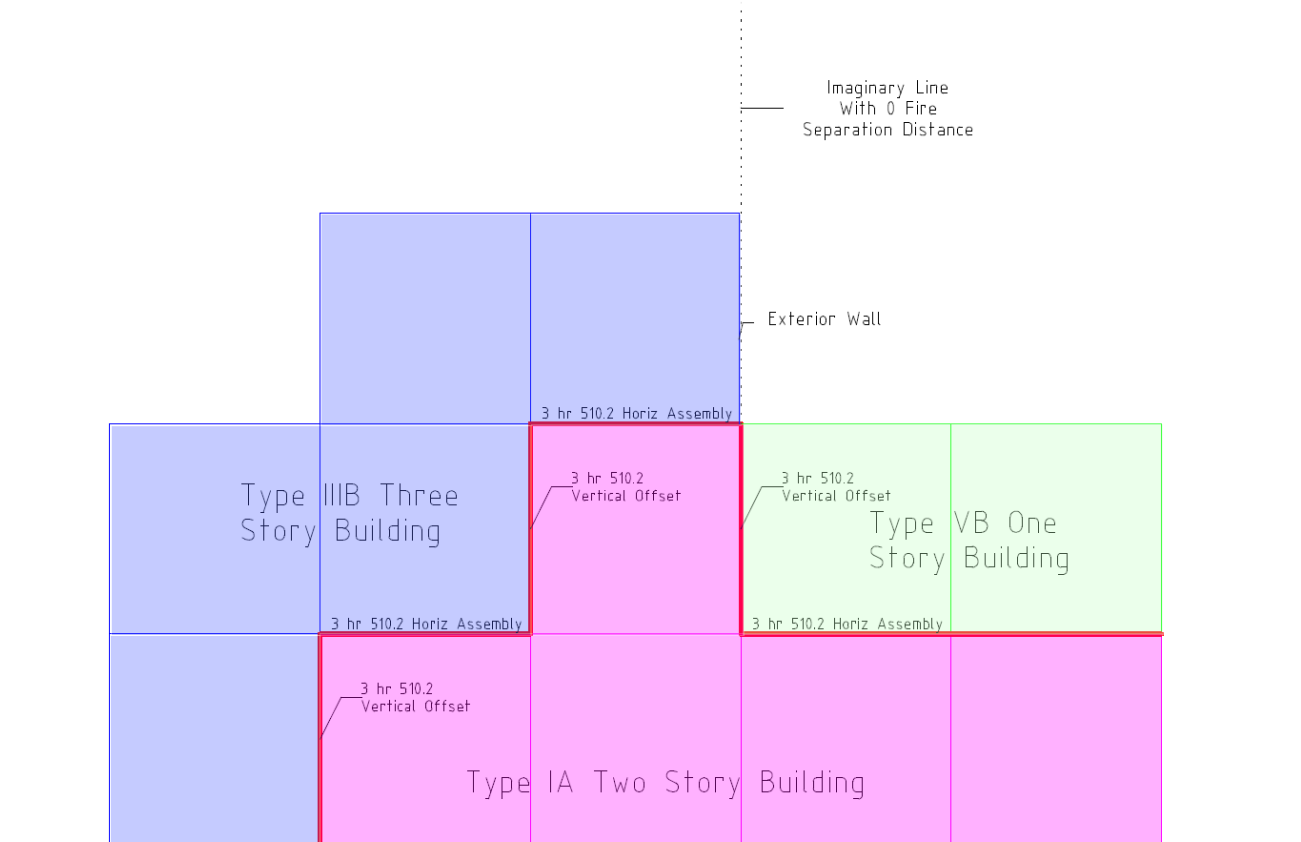


Figure 2. Two buildings above the podium.