

Bearing and non bearing walls in a structure



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Unlike the bearing walls non-bearing do not prevent the spread of fire in the event of an outbreak. In bearing walls, Fire can only spread through wall openings and shared ceiling and roof support spaces. Bearing walls hold or bears the load of the structure; the load of the structure is transferred to the bearing wall from the floor joists and the roof rafters. Nonbearing walls are nonload bearing support elements that serve the function of supporting the weight of itself and they do not bear or hold the load of the structure and they are generally used for partitioning an area in a building.

As a result of the function of the bearing wall in a building, its failure can result in the catastrophic collapse of the building it supports, whereas the collapse of the non-bearing wall has little or no effect on the structure of the building as they only support their own weight and do not hold the weight of the building in any form.

A fire fighter in fighting a fire must devise a tactic to identify the load-bearing walls and be aware of the dangers that are associated with the failure of the bearing walls (Wallace, 2001). A non-bearing wall is easier to build than bearing walls, a firefighter must be aware of the fact that non-bearing wall is more likely to be destroyed by fire and could cause the spread of fire; hence they must try to first quench fire from non-bearing walls in the event of an outbreak to prevent the spread of fire and make sure that fire does not spread to the bearing walls as its collapse would bring about a catastrophic destruction of the building.

The ability of the fire fighter to identify whether a wall is a bearing or a non-bearing one helps in efficiently tackling fire in the event of an outbreak.