

Changes to the Stretch Energy Code and Specialized Code Go into Effect on February 14th

Summary of Changes to 225 CMR 22.00 – Residential Stretch Energy Code and Municipal Opt-in Specialized Code

After more than 18 months of working with the Updated Stretch Energy Code and the newly created Municipal Opt-in Specialized Code, the Mass Department of Energy Resources (DOER) proposed a series of updates to these codes based on feedback from entities like the HBRA of Massachusetts, among other stakeholders. After a public hearing and some adjustments based on additional feedback, the updates are complete and scheduled to go into effect on **February 14, 2025**.

Below is a summary of the more significant changes for residential construction.

New Construction

- ***Embodied Carbon Credit*** - A new home can earn a 3-point HERS credit for embodied carbon savings earned through the use of either low embodied carbon concrete or insulation products. This 3-point credit means that the maximum HERS score for a mixed-fuel building would be 45 rather than 42, and 48 rather than 45 for an all-electric building. (*See table below*)
- ***ADU's get a relaxed HERS target*** - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) will retain a HERS 52-58 range (rather than the 42-48 range for all other residential applications) in order to not hamper the development of smaller ADU's. (*See table below*)
- ***Ceiling Insulation minimum R-Value reduced*** – The minimum requirement of R-60 for ceiling insulation has been reduced to R-49.
- ***Fenestration SHGC requirement removed*** – The Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) requirement of .40 has been removed. Windows with any SHGC number are now acceptable.

Alterations and Additions

- ***Finished basements and attics*** - Additions that add existing basement or attic spaces to the conditioned floor area of an existing dwelling unit due to changing the thermal boundary but not changing the building footprint or roofline do not require a HERS rating.
- ***Historic Buildings*** - For large changes to historic buildings, the HERS rating requirement is removed, allowing the project to follow a modified prescriptive compliance path.
- ***Clarification on Alterations requiring a HERS rating*** - Another clarification makes clear that projects meeting the definition of Extensive Alterations or Level 3 Alterations must also exceed 1,000 sq. ft. in order to trigger a HERS rating requirement for the entire dwelling unit.
- ***Major Alterations and Large Additions also get a relaxed HERS target*** - For Major Alteration and Large Additions (greater than 1,000 sq. ft.) and change of use projects that require a HERS rating, there is an increase (loosen) to the HERS rating requirement, now with the range of HERS scores moving from 52-58 to 65-75. (*See table below*)

TABLE R406.5 MAXIMUM ENERGY RATING INDEX

Clean Energy Application	Maximum HERS Index score ^{a,b}				
	New construction until June 30, 2024	New construction permits after July 1, 2024	New Construction with R406.5.2 embodied carbon credit	Accessory Dwelling Units	Major alterations, additions, or change of use ^c
<i>Mixed-Fuel Building</i>	52	42	45	52	52 65
Solar Electric Generation	55	42	45	55	55 70
<i>All-Electric Building</i>	55	45	48	55	55 70
Solar Electric & <i>All-Electric Building</i>	58	45	48	58	58 75

Below is the link to the complete changes for residential construction.

[Fall 2024 Stretch + Specialized Code Residential Redlines \(abbreviated\).pdf](#)

QUESTIONS? Contact Guy Webb at gwebb@HBRAMA.com