



# BUILDINGS 2020-007 BULLETIN TECHNICAL

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**SUPERSEDES**  
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First Deputy Commissioner

**PURPOSE:** This document clarifies conditions under which an addition, alteration, or repair to a building envelope may not be required to comply with the 2020 New York City Energy Conservation Code (NYCECC), pursuant to section NYCECC Chapters R5, C5, or Appendix CA (amendments to ASHRAE 90.1-2016).

**SUBJECT(S):** Additions, building envelope; Alterations, building envelope; Repairs, building envelope; Energy Code, existing building thermal envelope; Energy Code, existing roof assembly; Energy Code, existing exterior wall; Energy Code, existing curtain wall; Energy Code, existing frame wall; Energy Code, existing masonry wall; Energy Code, existing basement wall; Energy Code, existing slab-on-grade; Energy Code, existing doors; Energy Code, existing windows; Energy Code, existing skylights; New York City Energy Conservation Code; Energy Code.

In accordance with Section R402, Chapter R5, Section C402, and Chapter C5 of the NYCECC, and Section 5 of ASHRAE 90.1, additions, alterations, and/or repairs made to a building envelope shall comply with this bulletin, provided that the energy use of the building is not increased.

## I. DEFINITIONS

Terms used in this bulletin shall have the same meanings as set forth in Chapters R2 and C2 of the NYCECC, 1 RCNY 5000-01 and, for the purposes of this bulletin only, as follows:

- A. Roof plane.** A single plane of a roof assembly, whether at the top of a building or a roof setback, limited by a ridge, edge, wall, parapet or rail. Such roof plane is part of the envelope system and encloses conditioned space.
- B. Wall plane.** A single plane of an exterior wall assembly, from exterior corner to exterior corner, and foundation to roof plate or deck, inclusive of defining structural elements.

## II. EXCEPTIONS

**Exceptions to the requirement to comply with the provisions of the NYCECC related to building envelopes.**

Refer to Exceptions 1 through 6 under Section R503.1.1, Items 1, 2 and 4 under Section R504.2, Exceptions 1 through 7 under Section C503.1, and Items 1 through 4 under Section C504.2 of the NYCECC for relief for certain alterations and/or repairs to the existing building thermal envelope from the requirement to comply with the NYCECC provisions for new buildings, provided that the energy use of the building is not increased.

### III. INTERPRETATION OF CHAPTERS R5 & C5 OF THE NYCECC

Interpretation of Chapters R5 and C5 of the NYCECC with regard to additions, alterations, or repairs to building thermal envelopes. For additions, refer to Sections R502 and C502 of the NYCECC. For alterations or repairs to building thermal envelopes, the NYCECC and this bulletin shall apply. However, in accordance with Chapters R5 and C5 of the NYCECC, certain types of alteration or repair work related to the building thermal envelope need not comply with the provisions of the NYCECC if the applicant can demonstrate that such NYCECC compliance would create a hazardous or unsafe condition or would overload an existing building system.

In all cases, including 3A, B, C, D, or e below, where the scope of work affects only a portion of a building thermal envelope element, and the registered design professional determines that the installation of additional insulation in only that portion would create conditions such as freeze-thaw and cracking of the element, blockage of a vented drainage cavity, or condensation or mold in or around the element, the insulation of that portion may be omitted or limited to the original thermal value as applicable. In no case shall an alteration or repair increase the energy use of the building.

**A. Roofs, including roof setbacks.** For roof alterations or repairs, the following shall apply:

1. *Insulation when sheathing is not exposed.* Refer to Section R503.1.1, Exception 3 or 4, or Section C503.1, Exceptions 4 or 5, of the NYCECC.
2. *Insulation when sheathing or decking is exposed.* Where alterations performed on a roof or roof setback expose the sheathing or decking, insulation shall be required in accordance with Sections R503.1.1 or C503.3.1. This may require construction at the parapet, bulkhead, etc., to meet New York City Building Code (NYCBC) requirements. However, if provisions of the New York City Zoning Resolution preclude insulating above the sheathing or decking and there is a practical difficulty with insulating below the sheathing or deck, insulation of such roof plane shall not be required; in such a case, the applicant shall provide other measures to mitigate the calculated thermal loss of the noncompliant roof repair, in either source energy or the calculated energy cost.
3. *Insulation for repairs.* Refer to Sections R504 or C504 of the NYCECC.
4. *Air barriers when sheathing or decking is exposed.* Refer to Section C503.1, Exception 7.

**B. Ceilings under unconditioned roof attics.** a. Where the ceiling below an unconditioned roof attic or the floor of such unconditioned attic is replaced, such ceiling/floor shall be insulated in accordance with the NYCECC. However, if there is a practical difficulty with insulating the entire plane, insulation of the plane shall not be required; in such a case, the applicant shall provide other measures to mitigate the calculated thermal loss of the noncompliant replacement area, in either source energy or the calculated energy cost..

**C. Above-grade walls.**

1. *Masonry or framed walls.* Masonry or framed walls. Refer to Section R503.1.1, Exceptions 2 or 3, or Section C503.1, Exceptions 3 or 4, of the NYCECC.
2. *Curtain wall.*
  - a. *Panels.* Replacement of curtain wall vision panels shall be treated as window replacements and shall comply with the fenestration provisions of the NYCECC. Non-vision panels shall be treated as opaque panel replacements and shall comply with the provisions for opaque walls.
  - b. *Glazing.* Glass-only replacements within curtain wall panels-to-remain shall be treated as

- glazing replacements and, in accordance with Section C504.2, Item 1, of the NYCECC, do not need to comply with the Code, provided that the energy use of the building is not increased
- c. Alternate approach. If there is a practical difficulty in matching new vision or insulated panels to existing panel structure and framing, the applicant shall provide other measures to mitigate the calculated thermal loss of noncompliant replacement panels, in either source energy or the calculated energy cost.
  - d. Below-grade wall. If the scope of work exposes the interior or exterior of below-grade walls, the exposed portion of such walls shall be insulated to the depth below the new grade required by the NYCECC, and with a thermal value in accordance with the NYCECC.
  - e. Slab-on-grade. If the scope of work exposes the exterior edge conditions of a slab-on-grade, or includes the replacement of a part or all of a slab-on-grade, such exposed edge conditions shall be insulated in accordance with the NYCECC. If there is a practical difficulty with insulating the slab-on-grade edges, insulation of the edges shall not be required; in such a case, the applicant shall provide other measures to mitigate the calculated thermal loss of the non-insulated slab edge in either source energy or the calculated energy cost.

#### IV. INTERIOR RENOVATIONS

Where the interior finish of the exterior wall is removed as part of the scope of work in a room or space, such interior face shall be insulated in accordance with the NYCECC.

**Exception:** Where installation of required insulation would decrease the height or size of the room below the minimum height or size required by the New York City Building Code or New York State Multiple Dwelling Law, as applicable, such insulation may be reduced so that such room or space meets the minimum height and size requirements.

#### V. SUNROOMS & GREENHOUSES

Where a sunroom or greenhouse addition is conditioned, or where a sunroom or greenhouse is connected to conditioned space through a permanent opening, such sunroom and/or greenhouse shall comply with the requirements of the NYCECC for new construction. Where a sunroom or greenhouse addition is unconditioned, it may be added to an existing building provided that any new openings between the two have windows and/or doors complying with the NYCECC as thermal envelope elements

#### VI. SEALING

All envelope work, including work performed on the exterior wall of interior renovations, shall be sealed in accordance with Section R402.4 and/or C402.5 of the NYCECC.

#### VII. ZONING & PROPERTY LINE CONFLICTS

Where insulating an existing roof, wall or foundation plane in accordance with the NYCECC would extend over the lot line or street line, or would penetrate the maximum permitted zoning envelope, and

where the NYCECC, 1 RCNY 5000-01 or this bulletin would otherwise require insulation, either such wall or foundation plane shall be insulated from the inside of the building or the applicant shall provide other measures to mitigate the calculated heat loss, in source energy or the calculated energy cost.

## VIII. TRADE-OFFS

Where the envelope has previously been used in trade-offs to compensate for energy use exceeding NYCECC allowance in any system or unit outside of the scope of work, alterations to such envelope shall not reduce the thermal resistance of the envelope unless the building undergoes energy modeling to demonstrate whole-building compliance with the NYCECC.

### RELATED CODE/ZONING

NYCECC 101.2.4	NYCECC C402
NYCECC Chapter R5	2014 NYCBC 3202.2.1
NYCECC Chapter C5	ASHRAE 90.1 Section 5
NYCECC R402	RCNY 5000-01