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Building Energy Codes: 2012 IECC Final Action Hearings

http://www.energycodes.gov/status/2012_Final.stm



Building Energy Codes Program

2012 IECC Final Action Hearings Deliver DOE's 30% Energy Savings Goals

The world of building energy efficiency has reached a major milestone: a 2012 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) that will achieve a 30 percent increase in energy savings compared to its 2006 predecessor—capturing a goal pursued for the last several years by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and many collaborating organizations in the energy codes community. Building Code officials from across the nation voted by overwhelming majority to pass a series of energy-saving code changes to the IECC, including DOE's flagship proposals: EC13 for residential buildings and EC147 for commercial buildings, a collaborative effort with the New Buildings Institute (NBI) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

It is believed that this final package of code changes will achieve the 30 percent goal in both residential and commercial buildings. The vote was part of the International Code Council's (ICC's) final action hearings, which were held October 27-31, 2010 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

This decision represents the largest, one-step efficiency increase in the history of the national model energy code. The most impactful code changes achieved through these and several other DOE-supported proposals (EC 157, EC166, EC173 and others) are shown below. *Note: approvals are not final until the deadline for appeals to the ICC Board of Directors has passed.*

Residential Changes

- A mandatory air infiltration test in all homes to ensure building envelope efficiency
- A requirement that ducts be tested to a tighter duct leakage standard
- An increase in stringency for insulation and glazing efficiency requirements
- A set of options to solve the problem of "stranding"—and therefore wasting—heated water: keeping pipes "short and skinny," or insulating them to avoid waste
- The elimination of a former duplication of model energy codes between the IECC and the International Residential Code, streamlining the process into a singular, efficient path to residential compliance

Commercial Changes

- Comprehensive revisions to IECC's Chapter 5, including the compliance option to choose between high performance lighting, high performance HVAC equipment, or onsite renewable power generation
- More efficient air leakage requirements by requiring continuous air barriers for the building envelope
- A commissioning requirement for HVAC systems
- Increased efficiency of the opaque thermal envelope provisions
- Increased fenestration efficiency
- Mandated automatic daylighting controls for buildings with a window-to-wall ratio over 30%
- A requirement for skylights and daylighting controls for spaces over 10,000 ft² in certain building types
- Added efficiency requirements for cooling towers
- Increased minimum efficiency requirements for certain HVAC equipment
- Increased HVAC piping insulation provisions

Last updated: 22 March 2011