

Energy Efficient Building Requirements

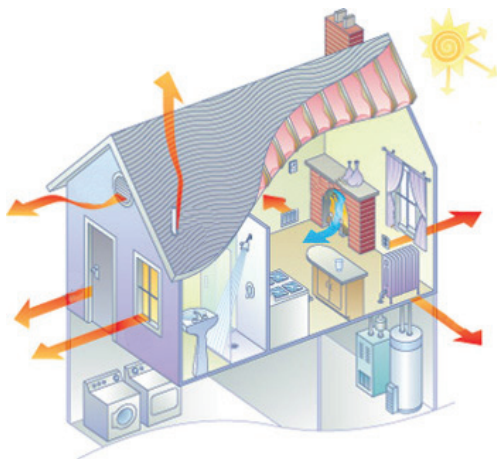
PURPOSE

To improve building energy efficiency for new and existing buildings in Massachusetts by locally adopting a building code which is a more energy efficient alternative to the state's Building Code.

There are many benefits associated with improving building energy efficiency. Residents, business owners, and municipal governments see energy savings and reduced energy bills. Energy efficient buildings consume less energy which helps to reduce greenhouse gas and environmental pollution. Increased energy efficiency also reduces dependence on foreign oil resources.

HOW IT WORKS

A Massachusetts municipality seeking to ensure that construction within its boundaries is designed and built above the energy efficiency requirements of the existing State Building Code (780 CMR) may elect to adopt a super-efficient building code known as the "Stretch Code" in place of the State's existing "base" Building Code. The term "stretch code" refers to the stretching of the existing Massachusetts State Building Code to cover more energy efficient measures. As of December, 2011, over one hundred municipalities had adopted the "Stretch Code" in Massachusetts.



The “Stretch Code” requires all new residential, commercial and industrial construction to minimize, to the extent feasible, the life-cycle cost of the facility by utilizing energy efficiency, water conservation and other renewable or alternative energy technologies. The “Stretch Code” uses real-world testing to ensure residential energy savings, and energy modeling to ensure commercial energy savings. Performance testing is necessary because prescriptive codes do not guarantee good installation, air and water tightness, or that thermal insulation will be effective. Even the smallest air gaps can reduce the thermal resistance value of insulation by 50% or more.

Any town or city in the Commonwealth may adopt the “Stretch Code” by decision of its governing body following a public hearing. In a city, the governing body is the city manager and the city council, or the mayor and city council. In towns, the governing body is the Board of Selectmen. In order to be adopted, the “Stretch Code” must be first considered at an appropriate municipal public hearing, subject to the municipality’s existing public notice provisions.

Adoption Process

- » Training for building officials
- » Public education campaign
- » Municipal Public Hearing
- » Vote of Town Meeting, or Mayor and City Council

Timing of Adoption

- » Municipal vote can be at any time
- » Code change takes effect on January 1st or July 1st
- » Base & Stretch Code both in place for the first 6 months (concurrency period) during which builders can choose EITHER code.

Towns are advised to seek adoption of the Stretch Code as a general bylaw through a vote of Town Meeting. There can be no amendments to the bylaw/ordinance language in order for the bylaw / ordinance to be in effect. Municipalities that successfully adopted the “Stretch Code” found public outreach to the building community on the key requirements played an important role in its passage. A model article and bylaw as well as public outreach materials are provided in the links below.

LINKS TO MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE STRETCH CODE, VISIT THE MASSACHUSETTS GREEN COMMUNITIES GRANT PROGRAM:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/energy-utilities-clean-tech/green-communities/>

SAMPLE WARRANT ARTICLE

STRETCH CODE MODEL GENERAL BYLAW (CITY)

STRETCH CODE MODEL GENERAL BYLAW (TOWN)

STRETCH CODE REQUIREMENTS FACT SHEET

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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