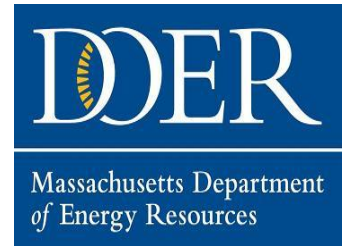




GUIDANCE for Specialized Energy Code Adoption



Specialized Energy Code Adoption Process

INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Opt-in Specialized Stretch Energy Code (Specialized Code) is required ([MGL 25A Section 6](#)) to be designed to help achieve MA GHG emission limits and building sector sub-limits set every five years from 2025 to 2050. As a result, all compliance pathways under the Specialized Code are designed to ensure new construction that is consistent with a net-zero Massachusetts economy in 2050, primarily through building envelope energy efficiency, that it turn enables reduced heating loads and efficient electrification. The largest greenhouse gas emissions impact for many buildings stems from the heating loads and choice of heating fuel for the building. Buildings reliant on combustion equipment have no clear path to zero emissions, while electrically heated buildings using heat pump technologies do due to the steady increase in renewable and clean energy sources on the ISO-NE electric grid, and opportunities for distributed solar and other on-site renewable energy generation. Accordingly, the Specialized Code requires all new buildings to be designed with electric service and wiring sufficient for future electrification of space and water heating as well as any combustion equipment appliance loads.

The Specialized Code regulations may be adopted by any municipality in the Commonwealth, by decision of its governing body. Municipalities that have already adopted the Stretch Energy Code and have enacted a bylaw or ordinance may choose to amend their existing Stretch Code Bylaws or Ordinances accordingly.

PROCESS for ADOPTION

In a city having a Plan D or Plan E charter the governing body shall be the city manager and the city council, and in any other city the mayor and city council. In towns the governing body shall be the town meeting. In order to be adopted, the regulations must be considered at an appropriate municipal public hearing, subject to the municipality's existing public notice provisions. Cities are advised to adopt the stretch and specialized energy codes by general ordinance and towns are advised to adopt the codes as a general bylaw.

Please note, once the Specialized Code is adopted by a municipality, all future editions, amendments, and modifications of the Specialized Code are automatically adopted unless the municipality rescinds adoption of the Specialized Code itself. A community must adopt the Specialized Code “as-is,” without applying any amendments or conditions, and in full; both the low rise residential and the commercial appendices are adopted together. As such, Municipalities must adopt the entirety of 225 CMR 22 and 23 including Appendices RC and CC

The following sample article, sample motion, and sample bylaw are provided as examples:

SAMPLE TOWN WARRANT ARTICLE:

To see if the Town will vote to enact Chapter ____ of the Town of _____ General Bylaws, entitled “Specialized Energy Code” for the purpose of regulating the design and construction of buildings for the effective use of energy and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, pursuant to the entirety of 225 CMR 22 and 23 including Appendices RC and CC, including future editions, amendments or modifications thereto, with an effective date of _____, a copy of which is on file with the Town Clerk, or take any other action relative thereto.

SAMPLE TOWN MEETING MOTION:

I move that the Town will enact Chapter ____ of the Town of _____ General Bylaws, entitled “Specialized Energy Code” for the purpose of regulating the design and construction of buildings for the effective use of energy and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, pursuant to the entirety of 225 CMR 22 and 23 including Appendices RC and CC, including future editions, amendments or modifications thereto, with an effective date of _____

SAMPLE BYLAW:

Chapter ____

SPECIALIZED ENERGY CODE

[Adopted 0-0-2023 ATM / STM by Art.]

§ ____-1 Definitions

§ ____-2 Purpose

§ ____-3 Applicability

§ ____-4 Stretch Code

§ ____-1 Definitions

International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) – The International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) is a building energy code created by the International Code Council. It is a model code adopted by many state and municipal governments in the United States for the establishment of minimum design and construction requirements for energy efficiency, and is updated on a three-year cycle. The baseline energy conservation requirements of the MA State Building Code are the IECC with Massachusetts amendments, as approved by the Board of Building Regulations and Standards and published in state regulations as part of 780 CMR.

Specialized Energy Code – Codified by the entirety of 225 CMR 22 and 23 including Appendices RC and CC, the Specialized Energy Code adds residential and commercial appendices to the Massachusetts Stretch Energy Code, based

on amendments to the respective net-zero appendices of the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) to incorporate the energy efficiency of the Stretch energy code and further reduce the climate impacts of buildings built to this code, with the goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from the buildings sector no later than 2050.

Stretch Energy Code - Codified by the combination of 225 CMR 22 and 23¹, not including Appendices RC and CC, the Stretch Energy Code is a comprehensive set of amendments to the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) seeking to achieve all lifecycle cost-effective energy efficiency in accordance with the Green Communities Act of 2008, as well as to reduce the climate impacts of buildings built to this code.

§ ____-2 Purpose

The purpose of 225 CMR 22.00 and 23.00 including Appendices RC and CC, also referred to as the Specialized Energy Code is to provide a more energy efficient and low greenhouse gas emissions alternative to the Stretch Energy Code or the baseline Massachusetts Energy Code, applicable to the relevant sections of the building code for both new construction and existing buildings.

§ ____-3 Applicability

This energy code applies to residential and commercial buildings.

§ ____-4 Specialized Code

The Specialized Code, as codified by the entirety of 225 CMR 22 and 23 including Appendices RC and CC, including any future editions, amendments, or modifications, is herein incorporated by reference into the Town of _____ General Bylaws, Chapter ____.

The Specialized Code is enforceable by the inspector of buildings or building commissioner.

¹ Note: The Stretch energy code was previously codified in 780CMR appendix 115.aa, prior to the passage of the 2021 Act Creating a Next-generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy (2021 Climate Act). The 2021 Climate Act transferred authority for promulgation of the Stretch energy code to the Department of Energy Resources.