

Virginia Energy Plan Talking Points – 2015 Code Update

An energy sub workgroup of various stakeholder interests was convened to collaborate on various energy provisions. The group was comprised of energy advocates, homebuilders, industry and manufacturing representatives and building officials.

Changes that occurred during the 2015 cycle that were supported by the energy sub workgroup:

- Tables C402.4 and C402.4.3
 - Maintains the 2012 projection factor calculation and the simple solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC) requirements for commercial fenestration.
 - Initially proposed by Responsible Energy Codes Alliance (RECA) and supported by an energy sub-workgroup.

The 2015 values contained a higher SHGC.

- C403.2.6.3 requires mechanical ventilation in dwelling units regulated by the commercial code.
 - Initially proposed by Braun/Nutone and supported by an energy sub-workgroup.

Closes a gap in commercial residential units which only required mechanical ventilation if a blower door test revealed less than 5 ACH

- R401.2/N1101.13 Compliance section cleanup.
 - Clarifies that the mandatory items apply to all compliance options, including REScheck and the Energy Rating Index.
 - Removes ambiguous language regarding the ERI approach.
 - Lastly, calls out the most recent version of REScheck as a compliance option.
 - Initially proposed by Responsible Energy Codes Alliance (RECA) and supported by an energy sub-workgroup.

Includes a reference to the ResCheck guidance document from DHCD that provides a U value workaround for VA amendments

- R403.3.3/N1103.3.3 Duct Testing (Mandatory). Compromise during the energy sub-workgroup.
 - Removes the visual option for testing.
 - Allows the contractor installing the system to perform the duct test as long as they have been trained on the equipment.
 - This was a compromise that brought the homebuilders on board.

Possible training opportunities are being explored through a grant partnership with Viridiant.

- Table R406.4 Maximum Energy Rating Index (ERI).
 - Incentivizes the ERI by bringing forward the 2018 Index value for climate zone 4.
 - Values were increased across all climate zones in the 2018 national code.
 - Index value raised from 54 to 62 for Virginia's climate zone (4).
 - Permits on-site renewable energy to be included in the calculation.
 - When on-site renewable energy is included, building thermal envelope ceiling value of R-49 and wood frame R-value of 20 or 13+5 (or U-factors in Table R402.1.4) must be used.
 - Initially proposed by Responsible Energy Codes Alliance (RECA) and supported by an energy sub-workgroup.

Energy issues continued for discussion during next cycle:

- Air sealing still provides an option for visual inspections.
- VA amendments for wall and ceiling insulation minimums remain at R-15 or R-13 + 1 for walls and R-38 for ceilings.
- Air changes remain at 5 vs. 3 in the model code.
- Exhaust only for ventilation

Stakeholders sent a request to the BHCD requesting continued discussion on these and other energy issues. We anticipate starting another sub-workgroup pending completion of this code cycle.

Code Update Process:

As of today, a decision has not been made as to when the next code update cycle will begin. Due to the delay in this cycle, we would need to start the process to update to the 2018 almost immediately with a NOIRA being published this coming spring, which would begin the workgroup meetings. Starting this spring would result in an effective date for the 2018 codes of probably late 2020.

The other option is to wait for the 2021 codes to become available and begin that process immediately. Those codes will likely be available/published mid to late 2020. If the NOIRA is published that spring, that would result in an effective date for the 2021 codes late in 2021 or early 2022.

There are pros and cons to both. One would keep VA on the 2015 for an extra year and a half and one would get us current with the national model codes vs. almost 2-cycles behind.

Involvement:

Advise DHCD of the desire to be placed on a workgroup notification list. Workgroups are divided into areas of interest.

Virginia is the first and currently the only state to use the national model code process cdpACCESS to update our state codes. cdpACCESS was customized for Virginia's regulatory processes and was created for the purpose of providing an open, transparent process that anyone can participate in without traveling to a meeting. It has the ability to:

- View every proposal submitted, along with the cost analysis and reason statement.
- Track specific proposals throughout the process that you are interested in.
- Submit public comment on any proposal.
- Read the results of the workgroup meetings/discussions.
- View the update process administratively with workgroup dates, public hearing dates, committee meetings, etc. all in one place.
- If you are interested in submitting a proposal, the system has the national model code language (for the code edition being updated) along with the Virginia versions already preloaded. Simply choose the section you want to change and it will automatically be produced in legislative format with any new language underlined and any deleted language stricken.
- Access to cdpVA is at: Va.cdpaceess.com