

Summary of Chapter Content Contained in the 2020 VT RBES

The following is a summarization of the different chapter contents contained in the full rule of the 2020 Vermont Residential Building Energy Standard or RBES. This document stands as a reference to the content contained in the 6 different chapters of the 2020 RBES, but does not stand to replace the full rule of the standard and specific requirements contained in each Chapter section of the 2020 RBES. This document is provided as supporting content in the application and understanding of the 2020 RBES provided by Efficiency Vermont on behalf of the Energy Code Assistance Center. For more information please contact the Energy Code Assistance Center @ 855-887-0673

CHAPTER 1 | SCOPE and ADMINISTRATION

This chapter contains provisions for the application, enforcement and administration of subsequent requirements of the code. In addition to establishing the scope of the code, Chapter 1 identifies which buildings and structures come under its purview. Chapter 1 is largely concerned with maintaining “due process of law” in enforcing the energy conservation criteria contained in the body of this code. Only through careful observation of the administrative provisions can the code official or other authority having jurisdiction, where one exists, reasonably expect to demonstrate that “equal protection under the law” has been provided.

CHAPTER 2 | DEFINITIONS

Chapter 2 is the repository of the definitions of terms used in the body of the code. Codes are technical documents and every word, term and punctuation mark can impact the meaning of the code text and the intended results. The code often uses terms that have a unique meaning in the code and the code meaning can differ substantially from the ordinarily understood meaning of the term as used outside of the code.

The terms defined in Chapter 2 are deemed to be of prime importance in establishing the meaning and intent of the code text. The user of the code should be familiar with and consult this chapter because the definitions are essential to the correct interpretation of the code and the user may not be aware that a term is defined.

Where understanding of a term’s definition is especially key to or necessary for understanding of a particular code provision, the term is shown in *italics* wherever it appears in the code. This is true only for those terms that have a meaning that is unique to the code. In other words, the generally understood meaning of a term or phrase might not be sufficient or consistent with the meaning prescribed by the code; therefore, it is essential that the code-defined meaning be known.

Guidance regarding tense, gender and plurality of defined terms as well as guidance regarding terms not defined in this code is provided.

CHAPTER 3 | GENERAL RULE REQUIREMENTS

Chapter 3 provides interior design conditions that are used as a basis for assumptions in heating and cooling load calculations and provides basic material requirements for insulation materials and fenestration materials, and provides standards for residential mechanical ventilation and combustion safety.

CHAPTER 4 | RESIDENTIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Chapter 4 contains the energy-efficiency-related requirements for the design and construction of residential buildings regulated under this code. It should be noted that the definition of a *residential building* in this code is unique for this code. In this code, a *residential building* is an R-2, R-3 or R-4 buildings three stories or less in height. All other R-1 buildings, including residential buildings greater than three stories in height, are regulated by the energy conservation requirements in the Vermont Commercial Building Energy Standards (CBES). The applicable portions of a residential building must comply with the provisions within this chapter for energy efficiency. This chapter defines requirements for the portions of the building and building systems that impact energy use in new residential construction and promotes the effective use of energy. The provisions within the chapter promote energy efficiency in the building envelope, the heating and cooling system, lighting and the service water heating system of the building. Vermont has adopted a two-tiered code structure with a “base code” that applies statewide, and a “*Stretch Code*” that is more stringent. The *Stretch Code* applies to all Act 250 development projects and is also available for municipalities that choose to adopt a higher energy standard.

CHAPTER 5 | EXISTING BUILDINGS

Chapter 5 of each set of provisions contains the technical energy efficiency requirements for existing buildings. Chapter 5 provisions address the maintenance of buildings in compliance with the code as well as how additions, alterations, repairs and changes of occupancy need to be addressed from the standpoint of energy efficiency. Specific provisions are provided for historic buildings.

CHAPTER 6 | REFERENCE STANDARDS

The code contains numerous references to standards that are used to regulate materials and methods of construction. Chapter 6 contains a comprehensive list of all standards that are referenced in the code. The standards are part of the code to the extent of the reference to the standard. Compliance with the referenced standard is necessary for compliance with this code. By providing specifically adopted standards, the construction and installation requirements necessary for compliance with the code can be readily determined. The basis for code compliance is, therefore, established and available on an equal basis to the code official, or other authority having jurisdiction, where one exists, contractor, designer and owner.

Chapter 6 is organized in a manner that makes it easy to locate specific standards. It lists all of the referenced standards, alphabetically, by acronym of the promulgating agency of the standard. Each agency’s standards are then listed in either alphabetical or numeric order based upon the standard identification. The list also contains the title of the standard; the edition (date) of the standard referenced; any addenda included as part of the ICC adoption; and the section or sections of this code that reference the standard.