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2015

INTERNATIONAL CODE<sup>®</sup>

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Energy Conservation  
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# 2015 IECC®

## INTERNATIONAL Energy Conservation Code®

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2015 International Energy Conservation Code®

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# PREFACE

## Introduction

Internationally, code officials recognize the need for a modern, up-to-date energy conservation code addressing the design of energy-efficient building envelopes and installation of energy-efficient mechanical, lighting and power systems through requirements emphasizing performance. The *International Energy Conservation Code*®, in this 2015 edition, is designed to meet these needs through model code regulations that will result in the optimal utilization of fossil fuel and nondepletable resources in all communities, large and small.

This code contains separate provisions for commercial buildings and for low-rise residential buildings (3 stories or less in height above grade). Each set of provisions, IECC—Commercial Provisions and IECC—Residential Provisions, is separately applied to buildings within their respective scopes. Each set of provisions is to be treated separately. Each contains a Scope and Administration chapter, a Definitions chapter, a General Requirements chapter, a chapter containing energy efficiency requirements and existing building provisions applicable to buildings within its scope.

This comprehensive energy conservation code establishes minimum regulations for energy-efficient buildings using prescriptive and performance-related provisions. It is founded on broad-based principles that make possible the use of new materials and new energy-efficient designs. This 2015 edition is fully compatible with all of the *International Code Council (ICC)®* (i-Codes®) published by the International Code Council (ICC)®, including: the *International Building Code*®, *International Existing Building Code*®, *International Fire Code*®, *International Gas Code*®, *International Green Construction Code*®, *International Mechanical Code*®, *ICC Performance Code*®, *International Plumbing Code*®, *International Private Sewage Disposal Code*®, *International Property Maintenance Code*®, *International Residential Code*®, *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code*™, *International Wildland-Urban Interface Code*® and *International Zoning Code*®.

The *International Energy Conservation Code* provisions provide many benefits, among which is the model code development process that offers an international forum for energy professionals to discuss performance and prescriptive code requirements. This forum provides an excellent arena to debate proposed revisions. This model code also encourages international consistency in the application of provisions.

## Development

The first edition of the *International Energy Conservation Code* (1998) was based on the 1995 edition of the *Model Energy Code* promulgated by the Council of American Building Officials (CABO) and included changes approved through the CABO Code Development Procedures through 1997. CABO assigned all rights and responsibilities to the International Code Council and its three statutory members at that time, including Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc. (BOCA), International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO) and Southern Building Code Congress International (SBCCI). This 2015 edition presents the code as originally issued, with changes reflected in the 2000 through 2012 editions and with changes approved through the ICC Code Development Process through 2014. A new edition such as this is promulgated every 3 years.

This code is founded on principles intended to establish provisions consistent with the scope of an energy conservation code that adequately conserves energy; provisions that do not unnecessarily increase construction costs; provisions that do not restrict the use of new materials, products or methods of construction; and provisions that do not give preferential treatment to particular types or classes of materials, products or methods of construction.

## Adoption

The International Code Council maintains a copyright in all of its codes and standards. Maintaining copyright allows the ICC to fund its mission through sales of books, in both print and electronic formats. The *International Energy Conservation Code* is designed for adoption and use by jurisdictions that recognize and acknowledge the ICC's copyright in the code, and further acknowledge the substantial shared value of the public/private partnership for code development between jurisdictions and the ICC.

The ICC also recognizes the need for jurisdictions to make laws available to the public. All ICC codes and ICC standards, along with the laws of many jurisdictions, are available for free in a non-downloadable form on the ICC's website. Jurisdictions should contact the ICC at [adoptions@icc-safe.org](mailto:adoptions@icc-safe.org) to learn how to adopt and distribute laws based on the *International Energy Conservation Code* in a manner that provides necessary access, while maintaining the ICC's copyright.

## Maintenance

The *International Energy Conservation Code* is kept up to date through the review of proposed changes submitted by code enforcing officials, industry representatives, design professionals and other interested parties. Proposed changes are carefully considered through an open code development process in which all interested and affected parties may participate.

The contents of this work are subject to change through both the code development cycles and the governmental body that enacts the code into law. For more information regarding the code development process, contact the Codes and Standards Development Department of the International Code Council.

While the development procedure of the *International Energy Conservation Code* assures the highest degree of care, the ICC, its members and those participating in the development of this code do not accept any liability resulting from compliance or noncompliance with the provisions because the ICC does not have the power or authority to police or enforce compliance with the contents of this code. Only the governmental body that enacts the code into law has such authority.

## Code Development Committee Responsibilities (Letter Designations in Front of Section Numbers)

In each code development cycle, proposed changes to the code are considered at the Committee Action Hearings by the applicable International Code Development Committee. The IECC—Commercial Provisions (sections designated with a "C" prior to the section number) are primarily maintained by the Commercial Energy Code Development Committee. The IECC—Residential Provisions (sections designated with an "R" prior to the section number) are maintained by the Residential Energy Code Development Committee. This is designated in the chapter headings by a [CE] and [RE], respectively.

Maintenance responsibilities for the IECC are designated as follows:

[CE] = Commercial Energy Code Development Committee

[RE] = Residential Energy Code Development Committee

For the development of the 2018 edition of the I-Codes, there will be three groups of code development committees and they will meet in separate years. Note that these are tentative groupings.

<b>Group A Codes (Heard in 2015, Code Change Proposals Deadline: January 12, 2015)</b>	<b>Group B Codes (Heard in 2016, Code Change Proposals Deadline: January 11, 2016)</b>	<b>Group C Codes (Heard in 2017, Code Change Proposals Deadline: January 11, 2017)</b>
International Building Code –Fire Safety (Chapters 7, 8, 9, 14, 26) –Means of Egress (Chapters 10, 11, Appendix E) –General (Chapters 2-6, 12, 27-33, Appendices A, B, C, D, K)	Administrative Provisions (Chapter 1 of all codes except IRC and IECC, adminis- trative updates to currently referenced standards, and designated definitions)	International Green Construction Code
International Fuel Gas Code	International Building Code –Structural (Chapters 15-25, Appendices F, G, H, I, J, L, M)	
International Existing Building Code	<b>International Energy Conservation Code</b>	
International Mechanical Code	International Fire Code	
International Plumbing Code	International Residential Code –IRC-Building (Chapters 1-10, Appendices E, F, H, J, K, L, M, O, R, S, T, U)	
International Private Sewage Disposal Code	International Wildland-Urban Interface Code	
International Property Maintenance Code		
International Residential Code –IRC-Mechanical (Chapters 12-24) –IRC-Plumbing (Chapters 25-33, Appendices G, I, N, P)		
International Swimming Pool and Spa Code		
International Zoning Code		

**Note:** Proposed changes to the ICC *Performance Code* will be heard by the code development committee noted in brackets [ ] in the text of the code.

## Marginal Markings

Solid vertical lines in the margins within the body of the code indicate a technical change from the requirements of the 2012 edition. Deletion indicators in the form of an arrow (➔) are provided in the margin where an entire section, paragraph, exception or table has been deleted or an item in a list of items or a table has been deleted.

A single asterisk [\*] placed in the margin indicates that text or a table has been relocated within the code. A double asterisk [\*\*] placed in the margin indicates that the text or table immediately following it has been relocated there from elsewhere in the code. The following table indicates such relocations in the 2015 edition of the *International Energy Conservation Code*.

<b>2015 LOCATION</b>	<b>2012 LOCATION</b>
C501	C101.4.1
C501.6	C101.4.2
C502 through C504	C101.4.3
C505	C101.4.4
C503.2	C101.4.5
C402.1.1	C101.5.2
C402.3	C402.2.1.1

<b>2015 LOCATION</b>	<b>2012 LOCATION</b>
R501	R101.4.1
R501.6	R101.4.2
R502 through R504	R101.4.3
R505	R101.4.4
R503.2	R101.4.5
R402.1	R101.5.2
R503.1.1.1	R402.3.6

## **Italicized Terms**

Selected terms set forth in Chapter 2, Definitions, are italicized where they appear in code text. Such terms are not italicized where the definition set forth in Chapter 2 does not impart the intended meaning in the use of the term. The terms selected have definitions that the user should read carefully to facilitate better understanding of the code.

# EFFECTIVE USE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION CODE

The *International Energy Conservation Code* (IECC) is a model code that regulates minimum energy conservation requirements for new buildings. The IECC addresses energy conservation requirements for all aspects of energy uses in both commercial and residential construction, including heating and ventilating, lighting, water heating, and power usage for appliances and building systems.

The IECC is a design document. For example, before one constructs a building, the designer must determine the minimum insulation  $R$ -values and fenestration  $U$ -factors for the building exterior envelope. Depending on whether the building is for residential use or for commercial use, the IECC sets forth minimum requirements for exterior envelope insulation, window and door  $U$ -factors and SHGC ratings, duct insulation, lighting and power efficiency, and water distribution insulation.

## Arrangement and Format of the 2015 IECC

The IECC contains two separate sets of provisions—one for commercial buildings and one for residential buildings. Each set of provisions is applied separately to buildings within their scope. The IECC—Commercial Provisions apply to all buildings except residential buildings three stories or less in height. The IECC—Residential Provisions apply to detached one- and two-family dwellings and multiple single-family dwellings as well as Group R-2, R-3 and R-4 buildings three stories or less in height. These scopes are based on the definitions of “Commercial building” and “Residential building,” respectively, in Chapter 2 of each set of provisions. Note that the IECC—Commercial Provisions therefore contain provisions for residential buildings four stories or greater in height. Each set of provisions is divided into five different parts:

Chapters	Subjects
1-2	Administration and definitions
3	Climate zones and general materials requirements
4	Energy efficiency requirements
5	Existing buildings
6	Referenced standards

The following is a chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the scope and intent of the provisions of the *International Energy Conservation Code* and applies to both the commercial and residential energy provisions.

**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 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.

Additional definitions regarding climate zones are found in Tables 301.3(1) and (2). These are not listed in Chapter 2.

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 Requirements.** Chapter 3 specifies the climate zones that will serve to establish the exterior design conditions. In addition, 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.

Climate has a major impact on the energy use of most buildings. The code establishes many requirements such as wall and roof insulation R-values, window and door thermal transmittance requirement (*U*-factors) as well as provisions that affect the mechanical systems based upon the climate where the building is located. This chapter contains information that will be used to properly assign the building location into the correct climate zone and is used as the basis for establishing requirements or elimination of requirements.

**Chapter 4 Energy Efficiency.** Chapter 4 of each set of provisions contains the technical requirements for energy efficiency.

**Commercial Energy Efficiency.** Chapter 4 of the IECC—Commercial Provisions contains the energy-efficiency-related requirements for the design and construction of most types of commercial buildings and residential buildings greater than three stories in height above grade. Residential buildings, townhouses and garden apartments three stories or less in height are covered in the IECC—Residential Provisions. This chapter defines requirements for the portions of the building and building systems that impact energy use in new commercial construction and new residential construction greater than three stories in height, and promotes the effective use of energy. The provisions within the chapter promote energy efficiency in the building envelope, the heating and cooling system and the service water heating system of the building.

**Residential Energy Efficiency.** Chapter 4 of the IECC—Residential Provisions 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 a detached one- and two-family dwelling and multiple single-family dwellings as well as R-2, R-3 or R-4 buildings three stories or less in height. All other buildings, including residential buildings greater than three stories in height, are regulated by the energy conservation requirements in the IECC—Commercial Provisions. 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 and the service water heating system of the building.

**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 Referenced 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, 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.

## Abbreviations and Notations

The following is a list of common abbreviations and units of measurement used in this code. Some of the abbreviations are for terms defined in Chapter 2. Others are terms used in various tables and text of the code.

AFUE	Annual fuel utilization efficiency
bhp	Brake horsepower (ft-lbs)
Btu	British thermal unit
Btu/h-ft <sup>2</sup>	Btu per hour per square foot
C-factor	See Chapter 2—Definitions
CDD	Cooling degree days
cfm	Cubic feet per minute
cfm/ft <sup>2</sup>	Cubic feet per minute per square foot
ci	Continuous insulation
COP	Coefficient of performance
DCV	Demand control ventilation
°C	Degrees Celsius
°F	Degrees Fahrenheit
DWHR	Drain water heat recovery
DX	Direct expansion
$E_c$	Combustion efficiency
$E_v$	Ventilation efficiency
$E_t$	Thermal efficiency
EER	Energy efficiency ratio
EF	Energy factor
ERI	Energy Rating index
F-factor	See Chapter 2—Definitions

FDD	Fault detection and diagnostics
FEG	Fan efficiency grade
FL	Full load
ft <sup>2</sup>	Square foot
gpm	Gallons per minute
HDD	Heating degree days
hp	Horsepower
HSPF	Heating seasonal performance factor
HVAC	Heating, ventilating and air conditioning
IEER	Integrated energy efficiency ratio
IPLV	Integrated Part Load Value
Kg/m <sup>2</sup>	Kilograms per square meter
kW	Kilowatt
LPD	Light power density (lighting power allowance)
L/s	Liters per second
Ls	Liner system
m <sup>2</sup>	square meters
MERV	Minimum efficiency reporting value
NAECA	National Appliance Energy Conservation Act
NPLV	Nonstandard Part Load Value
Pa	Pascal
PF	Projection factor
pcf	Pounds per cubic foot
psf	Pounds per square foot
PTAC	Packaged terminal air conditioner
PTHP	Packaged terminal heat pump
<i>R</i> -value	See Chapter 2—Definitions
SCOP	Sensible coefficient of performance
SEER	Seasonal energy efficiency ratio
SHGC	Solar Heat Gain Coefficient
SPVAC	Single packaged vertical air conditioner
SPVHP	Single packaged vertical heat pump
SRI	Solar reflectance index
SWHF	Service water heat recovery factor
<i>U</i> -factor	See Chapter 2—Definitions
VAV	Variable air volume
VRF	Variable refrigerant flow
VT	Visible transmittance
W	Watts
w.c.	Water column
w.g.	Water gauge

# LEGISLATION

Jurisdictions wishing to adopt the 2015 *International Energy Conservation Code* as an enforceable regulation governing energy-efficient building envelopes and installation of energy-efficient mechanical, lighting and power systems should ensure that certain factual information is included in the adopting legislation at the time adoption is being considered by the appropriate governmental body. The following sample adoption legislation addresses several key elements, including the information required for insertion into the code text.

## SAMPLE LEGISLATION FOR ADOPTION OF THE *INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION CODE* ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A[N] [ORDINANCE/STATUTE/REGULATION] of the [JURISDICTION] adopting the 2015 edition of the *International Energy Conservation Code*, regulating and governing energy-efficient building envelopes and installation of energy-efficient mechanical, lighting and power systems in the [JURISDICTION]; providing for the issuance of permits and collection of fees therefor; repealing [ORDINANCE/STATUTE/REGULATION] No. \_\_\_\_\_ of the [JURISDICTION] and all other ordinances or parts of laws in conflict therewith.

The [GOVERNING BODY] of the [JURISDICTION] does ordain as follows:

**Section 1.** That a certain document, three (3) copies of which are on file in the office of the [TITLE OF JURISDICTION'S KEEPER OF RECORDS] of [NAME OF JURISDICTION], being marked and designated as the *International Energy Conservation Code*, 2015 edition, as published by the International Code Council, be and is hereby adopted as the Energy Conservation Code of the [JURISDICTION], in the State of [STATE NAME] for regulating and governing energy-efficient building envelopes and installation of energy-efficient mechanical, lighting and power systems as herein provided; providing for the issuance of permits and collection of fees therefor; and each and all of the regulations, provisions, penalties, conditions and terms of said Energy Conservation Code on file in the office of the [JURISDICTION] are hereby referred to, adopted, and made a part hereof, as if fully set out in this legislation, with the additions, insertions, deletions and changes, if any, prescribed in Section 2 of this ordinance.

**Section 2.** The following sections are hereby revised:

Sections C101.1 and R101.1. Insert: [NAME OF JURISDICTION].

**Section 3.** That [ORDINANCE/STATUTE/REGULATION] No. \_\_\_\_\_ of [JURISDICTION] entitled [FILL IN HERE THE COMPLETE TITLE OF THE LEGISLATION OR LAWS IN EFFECT AT THE PRESENT TIME SO THAT THEY WILL BE REPEALED BY DEFINITE MENTION] and all other ordinances or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**Section 4.** That if any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this legislation is, for any reason, held to be unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The [GOVERNING BODY] hereby declares that it would have passed this law, and each section, subsection, clause or phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses and phrases be declared unconstitutional.

**Section 5.** That nothing in this legislation or in the Energy Conservation Code hereby adopted shall be construed to affect any suit or proceeding impending in any court, or any rights acquired, or liability incurred, or any cause or causes of action acquired or existing, under any act or ordinance hereby repealed as cited in Section 3 of this law; nor shall any just or legal right or remedy of any character be lost, impaired or affected by this legislation.

**Section 6.** That the [JURISDICTION'S KEEPER OF RECORDS] is hereby ordered and directed to cause this legislation to be published. (An additional provision may be required to direct the number of times the legislation is to be published and to specify that it is to be in a newspaper in general circulation. Posting may also be required.)

**Section 7.** That this law and the rules, regulations, provisions, requirements, orders and matters established and adopted hereby shall take effect and be in full force and effect [TIME PERIOD] from and after the date of its final passage and adoption.



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# CHAPTER 1 [CE]

## SCOPE AND ADMINISTRATION

### PART 1—SCOPE AND APPLICATION

#### SECTION C101 SCOPE AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

**C101.1 Title.** This code shall be known as the *International Energy Conservation Code* of [NAME OF JURISDICTION], and shall be cited as such. It is referred to herein as “this code.”

**C101.2 Scope.** This code applies to *commercial buildings* and the buildings’ sites and associated systems and equipment.

**C101.3 Intent.** This code shall regulate the design and construction of buildings for the use and conservation of energy over the life of each building. This code is intended to provide flexibility to permit the use of innovative approaches and techniques to achieve this objective. This code is not intended to abridge safety, health or environmental requirements contained in other applicable codes or ordinances.

**C101.4 Applicability.** Where, in any specific case, different sections of this code specify different materials, methods of construction or other requirements, the most restrictive shall govern. Where there is a conflict between a general requirement and a specific requirement, the specific requirement shall govern.

**C101.4.1 Mixed occupancy.** Where a building includes both *residential* and *commercial* occupancies, each occupancy shall be separately considered and meet the applicable provisions of IECC—Commercial Provisions or IECC—Residential Provisions.

**C101.5 Compliance.** *Residential buildings* shall meet the provisions of IECC—Residential Provisions. *Commercial buildings* shall meet the provisions of IECC—Commercial Provisions.

**C101.5.1 Compliance materials.** The *code official* shall be permitted to approve specific computer software, worksheets, compliance manuals and other similar materials that meet the intent of this code.

#### SECTION C102 ALTERNATE MATERIALS—METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN OR INSULATING SYSTEMS

**C102.1 General.** This code is not intended to prevent the use of any material, method of construction, design or insulating system not specifically prescribed herein, provided that such construction, design or insulating system has been *approved* by the *code official* as meeting the intent of this code.

**C102.1.1 Above code programs.** The *code official* or other authority having jurisdiction shall be permitted to deem a national, state or local energy efficiency program

to exceed the energy efficiency required by this code. Buildings *approved* in writing by such an energy efficiency program shall be considered in compliance with this code. The requirements identified as “mandatory” in Chapter 4 shall be met.

### PART 2—ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

#### SECTION C103 CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

**C103.1 General.** Construction documents and other supporting data shall be submitted in one or more sets with each application for a permit. The construction documents shall be prepared by a registered design professional where required by the statutes of the jurisdiction in which the project is to be constructed. Where special conditions exist, the *code official* is authorized to require necessary construction documents to be prepared by a registered design professional.

**Exception:** The *code official* is authorized to waive the requirements for construction documents or other supporting data if the *code official* determines they are not necessary to confirm compliance with this code.

**C103.2 Information on construction documents.** Construction documents shall be drawn to scale upon suitable material. Electronic media documents are permitted to be submitted where *approved* by the *code official*. Construction documents shall be of sufficient clarity to indicate the location, nature and extent of the work proposed, and show in sufficient detail pertinent data and features of the building, systems and equipment as herein governed. Details shall include, but are not limited to, the following as applicable:

1. Insulation materials and their *R*-values.
2. Fenestration *U*-factors and solar heat gain coefficients (SHGCs).
3. Area-weighted *U*-factor and solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC) calculations.
4. Mechanical system design criteria.
5. Mechanical and service water heating system and equipment types, sizes and efficiencies.
6. Economizer description.
7. Equipment and system controls.
8. Fan motor horsepower (hp) and controls.
9. Duct sealing, duct and pipe insulation and location.
10. Lighting fixture schedule with wattage and control narrative.
11. Location of *daylight* zones on floor plans.
12. Air sealing details.