

Replacement of an Existing Water Heater

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Code reference: 2023 Oregon Plumbing Specialty Code (OPSC)—Section 301.2.5

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Subject: Replacement of an existing water heater

Questions:

When replacing a water heater in an existing building, am I required to bring the existing plumbing system up to code?

Answers:

Section 301.2.5 of the OPSC states that in existing buildings or premises in which plumbing installations are to be altered, repaired, or renovated the Building Official has discretionary powers to permit deviation from the provisions of the code, provided that such a proposal to deviate is first submitted for proper determination in order that health and safety requirements, as they pertain to plumbing, shall be observed. The following plumbing code provisions are necessary to consider in existing buildings to protect the health and safety of the public:

1. Raising of water heaters in garages per Section 507.6.
2. Seismic anchoring or strapping per Section 507.2.
3. Relief valve termination per Section 608.5.
4. Thermal expansion protection per Section 608.3.
5. Combustion air per Section 505.0.

The following plumbing code provisions are not necessary to consider in existing buildings to protect the health & safety of the public:

1. Water pipe sizing per Section 610.0.
2. Water heater drip pan per Section 507.4
3. Existing water pressure exceeding 80 psi per Section 608.2.

Contact:

Visit the division website to [contact a building code specialist](#).