

New Residential Building Code Maintains Oregon's Regional Energy Efficiency Leadership

As of October 1, 2017, new homes built in Oregon will be more energy efficient than nearly all homes in comparable climates across the country, including California. That is when the 2017 Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) goes into effect. The code is a prescriptive set of construction standards which all homes in Oregon must meet prior to occupation, and it includes innovative ways to create a more efficient home.

Based on a preliminary review by Oregon Building Codes Division (BCD) staff, the 2017 ORSC requires greater energy efficiency than homes built to prescriptive standards just over the border in California. Oregon's code has a clear path to compliance, choices to best suit the needs of the homeowner, and statewide enforcement to ensure well-built, efficient homes across the state.

The 2017 ORSC was developed and approved in an open, collaborative, and public process where the construction industry, energy advocates, and the general public were able to review and debate potential code provisions.

The new ORSC efficiency standards were developed over several months by Oregon's home builders and energy advocates, who focused on balancing improved energy efficiency and consumer costs. Experts at the University of Oregon will review the ORSC for compliance with national efficiency benchmarks.

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy ranks states based on an energy efficiency score, which includes individual efficiency scores for utilities, transportation, appliances, heat and power, state government initiatives, and building energy codes. The building code score has consistently been [among the top in the nation](#). Oregon's overall score dropped from 4th to 7th in 2016, but its building code score remained at 6.5 out of a possible 7 points.

In contrast with many other efficiency leaders, Oregon's energy codes are developed in a consensus process informed by independent research, and implemented statewide to ensure equal protection and consistent outcomes for all Oregonians.