

2023 ORSC: Continued reference to the 2022 OSSC for nonprescriptive design

Statewide Alternate Methods are approved by the division administrator in consultation with the appropriate advisory board. The advisory board's review includes technical and scientific facts of the proposed alternate method. In addition building officials shall approve the use of any material, design or method of construction addressed in a statewide alternate method; the decision to use a statewide alternate method is at the discretion of the applicant; and statewide alternate methods do not limit the authority of the building official to consider other proposed alternate methods encompassing the same subject matter.

Code reference: 2023 Oregon Residential Specialty Code
2022 Oregon Structural Specialty Code

Date: Issued Jan. 20, 2026

Overview

Using the structural design provisions from the Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC) for nonprescriptive designs of portions of structures governed by the Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) is a well-established practice. A substantive change occurred between the 2022 OSSC and 2025 OSSC regarding snow load design. To ease the transition for developers, home builders and designers using the OSSC for nonprescriptive snow load design, this Statewide Alternate Method permits continued use of the 2022 OSSC throughout the effective period of the 2023 ORSC.

Discussion

Chapter 2 of the 2023 ORSC defines “*Building Code*” as the OSSC adopted by Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 918-460-0010. This adoption rule establishes the code’s effective date and phase-in period. Due to the staggered adoption schedules of the codes, the 2023 ORSC will reference the 2022 OSSC until March 31, 2026, then reference the 2025 OSSC through March 31, 2027 under this described code hierarchy and reference of the defined term.

The 2025 OSSC is based on the 2024 International Building Code, which references the American Society of Engineer’s (ASCE) 7-22 *Minimum Design Loads and Associated Criteria for Buildings and Other Structures* for design snow load provisions. ASCE 7-22 introduces different mapping techniques and design methodologies, resulting in increased design snow loads in some areas of the state and decreased in others. This nationally approved model code shift from a uniform hazard to a uniform risk design approach for snow loads aims to achieve consistent safety levels across regions by incorporating 40 years of the latest data and advanced reliability analysis. This national code change was vetted, reviewed, recommended, and approved by the Structural Engineers Association of Oregon and Building Codes Structures Board during the 2025 OSSC adoption process.

Conclusion

For application of the 2023 ORSC, customers may choose to continue referencing the 2022 OSSC for nonprescriptive design until the 2026 ORSC is adopted and becomes mandatory statewide under OAR 918-480-0005.

The technical and scientific facts for the statewide alternate method are approved.

Signature on file

Jan. 20, 2025

Todd Smith
Administrator
Building Codes Division

Date

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