

# Delaware Building Energy Codes Receive Update

An update to the state's building energy codes that took effect this month will help reduce long-term costs to consumers while also decreasing greenhouse gas emissions in Delaware.

Energy codes establish minimum design and construction requirements for energy efficiency in buildings, including insulation, air leakage limits, lighting and heating and cooling systems. The standards increase building sector energy efficiency, deliver energy cost savings to building owners and occupants, increase occupant comfort and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Delaware.

The update introduces energy efficiency improvements, including increased residential air sealing requirements, hot water pipe insulation and energy efficient windows and lighting options, as well as more efficient heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system operation resulting from improved duct design and sealing, energy efficient windows and lighting options.

"The adoption of these updated standards is an important step in helping Delawareans reduce their energy costs," said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. "It will also help us toward meeting our goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

Governor John Carney has committed to reducing the state's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 26 percent from 2005 levels by 2025. Electric power generation is among the top three sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Delaware.

Construction costs related to the updated codes will be offset by the energy savings accrued to building occupants and owners, according to analyses from the U.S. Department of

Energy, including two Delaware-specific assessments completed by the Pacific Northwest National Lab.

The state first established a minimum statewide code for energy conservation in 1979. The code, which is based on standards set by the International Code Council and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, was last updated in 2009. Legislation requires DNREC's Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy to review and update the state's regulations every three years. The latest code update went through a full regulatory process, including a public hearing in December and acceptance and consideration of public comment on the changes.

The update includes a six-month transition period, during which the Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy will provide targeted training and technical assistance to the construction industry and code enforcement officials. Topics that will be covered by the training will include:

- An overview of the changes
- Practical compliance strategies, particularly for the building envelope requirements in the new energy codes
- Construction and design strategies for air sealing smaller homes
- Other topics, including hot water pipe insulation and HVAC duct design

The training also will provide an opportunity for DNREC to gather additional feedback and input from participants to determine the need for follow-up training topics.

Visit DNREC's [Building Energy Codes](#) webpage for more information.

#### **About DNREC**

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state's natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities and educates Delawareans about

the environment. For more information, visit the [website](#) and connect with DNREC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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