



All I want for Christmas

is a new **MRC**

Code Changes You Need to Understand

by **Don Pratt and Roger Panineau**

[Editor's note: The authors of this article, Don Pratt and Roger Papineau, are the Home Builder Association of Michigan's experts on the Single State Construction Code and its requirements. Both have served on the State Construction Code Commission, Don as chair and Roger as the current representative for residential builders. Both have been active in the International Code Council's (ICC) code promulgation process, attending more ten-to-fifteen-day-long ICC hearings than they care to remember. Both have served on every Michigan Residential Code review committee since the passage of the Single State Construction Code Act in 1999. They alternate as the Chair and Vice-chair of HBAM's Building Code Committee. Don and Roger are also available to teach classes on the new 2015 MRC.]

We asked them to tell us about the most important changes from the 2009 Michigan Residential Code to the 2015 Michigan Residential Code which is scheduled to go into effect on February 8, 2016. The changes are not listed in order of their importance but rather as they would be found in the 2015 MRC.]

Top 26 Changes Between the 2009 and the 2015 MRC

1. Section R109.4 requires that when the Building Inspector finds construction that fails to comply with the MRC, they must identify the specific Code section and notify the permit holder in writing.

2. Added Section R303.4 which requires whole-house mechanical ventilation be installed when the air infiltration rate of a dwelling unit is 5 air changes per hour or less when tested with a blower door at 50 Pascals.

3. Section R312.2 in the 2009 MRC required a guard rail to be installed on a deck more than 30 inches above the ground at the location of the walking surface or the adjacent fixed seating. The fixed seating provision has been eliminated.

4. Sections R502, Wood Floor Framing; R602, Wood Wall Framing; and R802, Wood Roof Framing have been revised to reflect de-rated lumber values.

5. Section R507.2.4 Flashings and Figure R507.2.1(1) has been clarified for the placement of a deck to a structure including the flashing requirements.

6. Section R601.3 Vapor retarders now states that Class III only or no vapor retarder shall be permitted on the interior side of below-grade wall assemblies.

7. Section R909.2 & .3 Rooftop mounted photovoltaic panel systems, structural requirements and installation are now part of the Code.

8. Section R1003.9.1 Chimney caps and R1005.4 Factory-built chimneys have been revised and clarified to provide proper run-off from chimney caps and to seal against water intrusion.

9. Section N1101.16 of Chapter 11 also requires the posting of a permanent energy certificate on or in the electrical distribution panel and is required to be filled out by the builder or registered design professional.

10. Section N1102.4.1.2 now requires a mandatory blower door test be performed to verify air-leakage and to test the building thermal envelope. The building or dwelling unit shall be tested and verified as having an air leakage rate of not exceeding 4 air changes per hour. This applies to both the performance and the prescriptive provisions for compliance.

11. Table N1102.1.1 Insulation and fenestration requirements has been revised. Fenestration U-Factors went from 0.35 in all 5 climate zones to 0.32; Skylight U-Factors went from 0.60 in all 5 zones to 0.55; Wood Frame Wall R-Values in zone 7 went from R-21 in the cavity to R-20 in the cavity and now allows R-13 in the cavity along with R-5 rigid on the exterior; Mass Wall R-Values in zone 6A went

from 15/19 to 15/20; and Crawl Space Wall R-Values went from R-10 continuous on the exterior or R-13 in the interior to R-15 exterior and R-19 on the interior in all 5 zones.

12. N1102.4.1.1 Insulation of wall corners and headers has been clarified.

13. Table 1102.4.1.1 Air barrier and insulation installation table has been slightly revised and should be noted.

14. N1103.3 Duct sealing and testing provisions have been reorganized to clarify the application. The maximum duct leakage rates are now prescriptive rather than mandatory provisions to accommodate design flexibility.

15. N1103.5 Heated Water Circulation and Temperature Maintenance Systems have been modified and should be noted.

16. A new section, N1106, has been added to establish criteria for compliance using an energy rating index (ERI) analysis.

17. Chapter 15 has been slightly modified for Dryer Duct Length, Makeup Air for Range Hoods, Duct Installation, and Return Air.

18. Section M1502.4.4 and M1502.4.5 now allow for dryer exhaust duct power vents and M1506.2 has been added for exhausting duct lengths.

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19. Section M1506 is new and provides for a minimum clearance between air exhaust terminations and openings into the building and now states: air exhaust openings shall terminate not less than 3 feet from property lines; 3 feet from operable and non-operable openings into the building and 10 feet from mechanical air intakes except where the opening is located 3 feet above the air intake.

20. Section M1507 now requires whole house ventilation to be installed. Mechanical ventilation of kitchens and bathrooms is now described as local exhaust.

21. Section G2414.6 of the Fuel Gas Code has been modified and now clearly prohibits the use of PVC and CPVC pipe for the supplying of fuel gas.

22. Section G2415.7 of the Fuel Gas Code has been modified as it relates to the protection of concealed piping against physical damage.

23. Section G2422.1 of the Fuel Gas Code has been modified to prohibit the use of any connection device for gas grills, fire pits, and patio heaters that is not specifically designed for the purpose and must comply with ANSI Z21.54.

24. Section G2426.7.1 has been added to stipulate that an appliance vent terminal is not permitted in a location within 12 inches of the arc of a swinging door.

25. P2503.5.1 rough plumbing can be tested by either water or air as long as it showing no evidence of leakage. The IRC eliminated air testing and the Michigan put it back in.

26. Section E3902.11 Arc-fault protection of bedroom outlets has been removed from the 2015 MRC. ●

Don't Believe Everything You're Told About The Code

by **Lee Schwartz**

Unfortunately, there's a lot of misinterpretation about the contents of the upcoming 2015 Michigan Residential Code (MRC) out there. Even some building officials are getting it wrong. Here's the story.

1. Sprinklers will not be required under the 2015 MRC.
2. Underfloor protection will not be required in the 2015 MRC.
3. Foam sheathing on the outside of all exterior walls will not be required, but optional.
4. Arc fault circuit interrupters will no longer be required in bedrooms (or anywhere else).
5. The residential chapter of the Michigan Uniform Energy Code will not apply to one- and two-family homes and townhouses being built under the MRC. All the energy efficiency requirements for these structures will now be found in Chapter 11 of the MRC. The Michigan Uniform Energy Code's residential requirements will apply to apartments.
6. The National Electrical Code will not apply to homes built under the MRC. All electrical requirements will be found in Part VIII of the MRC (Chapters 34-40).
7. A blower door test will be required on all new homes to verify they meet the new requirement of no more than 4 air changes per hour (ACH).
8. Whole house mechanical ventilation will now be required. Mechanical ventilation of kitchens and bathrooms is now described as local exhaust.
9. The Michigan Residential Code will be the only code that will apply to one- and two-family homes and townhouses not more than three stories in height with a separate means of egress. The Michigan Building Code, The Michigan Plumbing Code, The Michigan Mechanical Code, The National Electrical Code, and The Michigan Uniform Energy Code will not apply. Anyone who tells you they will is mistaken. ●

HBA SPOTLIGHT

Home Builders Association of Central Michigan

The Home Builders Association of Central Michigan, chartered in 1966 and affiliated with both the Michigan and National Association of Home Builders, represents and addresses the concerns of the building industry. We are committed to serving our members and the community through member services, education, political and community involvement.

Our mission as the voice of the building industry is to promote ethical practices and strive to provide safe and affordable housing.

Our paramount responsibility is to our members, our community and our country.

As members of a progressive industry, the Home Builders Association of Central Michigan encourages research to develop new materials, new building techniques, new building equipment and improved methods of home financing, to the end that every home purchaser may get the greatest value possible for every dollar.

We also support all sound legislative proposals affecting our industry and the people we serve shall have our informed and vigorous support.

Our builder and associate members represent the industry in every facet, from single and multifamily building to land development to remodeling up to and including small home improvement projects.

The Home Builders Association of Central Michigan supports our members and the community by providing many events throughout the year, including our annual Home Show showcasing an HGTV celebrity, thanks to our annual sponsors, Builders Surplus Auction in support of the Women's Shelter. We also participate in the fast built program with Habitat for Humanity and the Parade of Homes showcasing our builders craftsmanship along with the latest in colors, styles, design and trends in the home-building industry.

Our community support continues throughout the year into December when the members support families through our Toys For Tots drive, so that child is left behind at Christmas time.

With interest rates maintaining record low levels, the HBA of Central Michigan continuously promotes its motto that now is the time to buy, build and borrow; a statement we can stand behind.

The Home Builders Association of Central Michigan committed to the home building industry and the members that it serves. ●

