

EXISTING CONSTRUCTION DECISION TREE

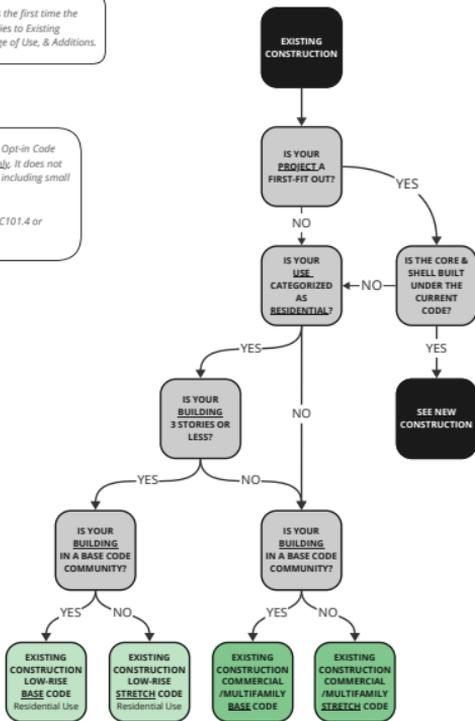
UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2025

#FunFact: This is the first time the Stretch Code applies to Existing Alterations, Change of Use, & Additions.

#FunFact: The Specialized Opt-in Code pertains to new buildings only. It does not pertain to existing buildings including small and large additions.

Reference CMR 23 Section CC101.4 or Section AC101.1.

#FunFact: A first time tenant fit-out is considered new construction, as triggered by the initial interior build-out. This applies to core and shell buildings permitted under the 2023 MA Stretch Energy Code (or a later version).



#FunFact: Additions, alterations, and change of use / occupancy each have different requirements. Similar to multiple use types, if an existing building has an addition and an alteration, then compliance is required for each individual portion.

#FunFact Any building can opt into the Stretch Code path and use the EnerPHIT compliance path.

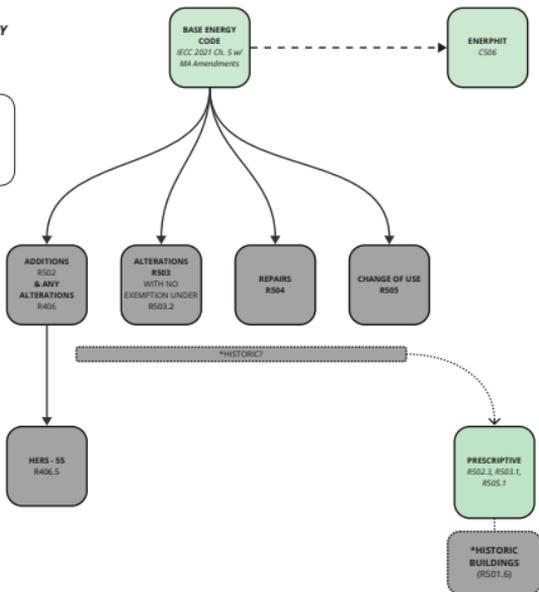
EXISTING CONSTRUCTION: LOW-RISE BASE CODE

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2025

LEGEND

- 2023-2026
- - - → OPTIONAL COMPLIANCE PATHWAY
- → CONDITIONAL COMPLIANCE PATHWAY

#FunFact CMR Amendments refer to the 2018 IECC. For reference, in the 2021 IECC: HERS table is 406.A, and Exception for unconditioned space to conditioned space is R501.6



HISTORIC BUILDINGS are not exempt from energy code though CODE OFFICIALS MAY PROVIDE WAIVERS for specific requirements within the code that cannot be met because they are in proven conflict or destroy the historic nature of the building.

EXISTING CONSTRUCTION: LOW-RISE STRETCH CODE

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2025

LEGEND

→ 2023-2026

- - - OPTIONAL COMPLIANCE PATHWAY

→ CONDITIONAL COMPLIANCE PATHWAY

#FunFact: Unlike a **DWELLING UNIT**, a **SLEEPING UNIT** has either sanitation or kitchen facilities but not both.

EXISTING CONSTRUCTION
LOW-RISE
RESIDENTIAL

#FunFact: The Specialized Opt-in Code does not apply to Low-Rise Existing Construction Additions.

#FunFact: Levels of alteration are applicable to the decision tree for the Low-Rise Residential Existing Construction Energy Code requirements.

STRETCH ENERGY CODE
DEFINE THE SCOPE OF IMPROVEMENTS

ENERGY
RISK

REPAIRS
Minor repairs to
maintenance or correcting
damage and does not
include substantial
replacement or other work
R004

**CHANGE OF
OCCUPANCY OR USE**
From one group to another
or use within a group
R005

ALTERATION
Repair or renovation of
the existing structure, use or
repair or add to
conditioned floor space
R006

ADDITION
Added conditioned floor
space not within the
existing building
R002

Converting non-conditioned space into conditioned space with modifications to the building envelope (e.g., new roof or exterior walls) is considered an Addition. However, if the conversion does not alter the existing envelope, it may follow the "top path" even if the area exceeds 1,000 sf.

"Level 3 Alterations" (EBC) apply where the work area exceeds 50% of the building area. "Extreme Alterations" (EBC Appendix A) apply where the work area exceeds 50% of the dwelling unit area.

IS THE PROJECT A LEVEL 3 ALTERATION OR EXTENSIVE ALTERATION EXCEEDING 50% OF OR EXCEEDING 100% OF THE EXISTING CONDITIONED FLOOR AREA?

New envelope assemblies in addition of less than 1,000 SF are exempt from Section R602.1.2 requirements (air leakage testing).

IS THE ADDITION TO A DWELLING UNIT EXCEEDING 1,000 SF OR EXCEEDING 100% OF THE EXISTING CONDITIONED FLOOR AREA?

An addition shall be deemed to comply with the code if the addition alone complies, or where the existing building and addition comply as a single building, or where the dwelling unit with the addition achieves a certified HERS Index Score per Table R406.5.

Section R504 directs users to Section R501.3 stating that repairs must comply with the code in which the building was constructed, provided this does not create hazards to life, health, or property. New materials must comply with code for new construction.

**PRESCRIPTIVE
R504 AND R501.3
Maintenance**

**PRESCRIPTIVE
R503.1**

**PRESCRIPTIVE
R503.1 AND
HERS 65/70/75
R406.5**
Dwelling Unit

**PRESCRIPTIVE
R503.1**

**PRESCRIPTIVE
R503.1 AND
HERS 65/70/75
R406.5**
Dwelling Unit

**PRESCRIPTIVE
R502.1**

**PRESCRIPTIVE
R502.1 AND
HERS 65/70/75
R406.5**
Combined
Dwelling Unit

**PRESCRIPTIVE
R506.1 per R406.5
Footnote c**

**HISTORIC BUILDINGS
R301.4**

HISTORIC BUILDINGS are not exempt from energy code though **CODE OFFICIALS MAY PROVIDE VARIANCES** for specific requirements within the code that cannot be met because they are in progress or repair or destroy the historic nature of the building.

#FunFact: The DQR Technical Guidance recommends that permit applicants confirm locally with the Authority Having Jurisdiction, which code applies.

#FunFact: Additions, alterations, and change of use occupancy each have different requirements. Similar to multiple use types, if an existing building has an addition and an alteration, then compliance is required for each individual portion.

CODE LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN
Maximum HERS Index Score: **Table R406.5**
HERS Index Score applies to dwelling units.
For non-dwelling units, Sections R502.2 or R503.1.1
Prescriptive requirements apply.

EXISTING CONSTRUCTION: COMMERCIAL BASE CODE

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2025

LEGEND

- 2023-2026
- - - → OPTIONAL COMPLIANCE PATHWAY
-→ CONDITIONAL COMPLIANCE PATHWAY

#FunFact: Altered portions shall conform without requiring the unaltered portions to comply with this code.

