

2016 BUILDING ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are Building Energy Efficiency Standards?

Building Energy Efficiency Standards are designed to ensure new and existing buildings achieve energy efficiency and preserve outdoor and indoor environmental quality.

These measures (Title 24, Part 6) are listed in the California Code of Regulations.

The California Energy Commission is responsible for adopting, implementing and updating building energy efficiency. Local city and county enforcement agencies have the authority to verify compliance with applicable building codes, including energy efficiency.

Why are energy standards important?

Since 1978, Energy Efficiency Standards make buildings more comfortable, lower energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Standards ensure that builders use the most energy efficient technologies and construction.

Why do the standards need to be updated?

The Energy Commission is required by law to adopt standards every three years that are cost effective for homeowners over the 30-year lifespan of a building. The standards are updated to consider and incorporate new energy efficient technologies and construction methods. The standards save energy, increase electricity supply reliability, increase indoor comfort, avoid the need to construct new power plants and help preserve the environment.

The effective date of the Standards is January 1, 2017.

How much will these standards add to the cost of a new home?

On average, the 2016 Building Energy Efficiency Standards will increase the cost of constructing a new home by about \$2,700, but will save \$7,400 in energy and maintenance costs over 30 years. In other words, when factored into a 30-year mortgage with a 5 percent interest rate, the standards will add about \$11 per month for the average home, but will save consumers roughly \$31 on monthly heating, cooling, and lighting bills.

How much energy will the 2016 standards save?

Single family homes built to the 2016 standards will use about 28 percent less energy for lighting, heating, cooling, ventilation, and water heating than those built to the 2013 standards. In 30 years, California will have saved enough energy to power 2.2 million homes, reducing the need to build 12 additional power plants.

Do the 2016 residential standards get us to zero net energy?

In 2008, California set bold energy-use reduction goals, targeting zero net energy (ZNE) use in all new homes by 2020 and commercial buildings by 2030. The ZNE goal means new buildings must use a combination of improved efficiency and distributed renewable energy generation to meet 100 percent of their annual energy need.

The 2016 standards will not get us to ZNE. However, they do get us very close to our goal and make important steps toward changing residential building practices in California. The 2019 standards will take the final step to achieve ZNE for newly constructed residential buildings throughout California.

Who supports the standards?

The California Building Industry Association supports the adopted standards as does the Natural Resources Defense Council and other environmental groups, investor owned utilities such as Pacific Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison, and publically owned utilities such as the Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

What buildings are covered by the standards?

All new construction of, and additions and alterations to, residential and nonresidential buildings are covered except hospitals, nursing homes, correctional centers, jails, and prisons.

Why do the standards vary by climate zone?

Measures that are cost effective in more extreme climates may not be cost effective in milder climates. Requiring measures by climate zone ensure that a building will have the most energy efficient features for that area. There are 16 climate zones in the state (www.energy.ca.gov/maps/renewable/building_climate_zones.html).

How can I learn more about the Standards?

Contact the Energy Commission's Energy Standards Hotline toll-free at (800) 772-3300 or (916) 654-5106 or email title24@energy.ca.gov.

Additionally, the Energy Commission's Blueprint newsletter is available at: www.energy.ca.gov/efficiency/blueprint/

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