

2015 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)

Section 402: Building Thermal Envelope

R402.4.1 Building thermal envelope.

The building thermal envelope shall comply with Sections R402.4.1.1 and R402.4.1.2. The sealing methods between dissimilar materials shall allow for differential expansion and contraction.

R402.4.1.1 Installation.

The components of the building thermal envelope as listed in Table R402.4.1.1 shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the criteria listed in Table R402.4.1.1, as applicable to the method of construction. Where required by the code official, an approved third party shall inspect all components and verify compliance.

R402.4.1.2 Testing.

The building or dwelling unit shall be tested and verified as having an air leakage rate not exceeding five air changes per hour in Climate Zones 1 and 2, and three air changes per hour in Climate Zones 3 through 8. Testing shall be conducted in accordance with ASTM E 779 or ASTM E 1827 and reported at a pressure of 0.2-inch w.g. (50 Pascals). Where required by the code official, testing shall be conducted by an approved third party. A written report of the results of the test shall be signed by the party conducting the test and provided to the code official. Testing shall be performed at any time after creation of all penetrations of the building thermal envelope.

During testing:

1. 1.Exterior windows and doors, fireplace and stove doors shall be closed, but not sealed, beyond the intended weather-stripping or other infiltration control measures.
2. 2.Dampers including exhaust, intake, makeup air, backdraft and flue dampers shall be closed, but not sealed beyond intended infiltration control measures.
3. 3.Interior doors, if installed at the time of the test, shall be open.
4. 4.Exterior doors for continuous ventilation systems and heat recovery ventilators shall be closed and sealed.
5. 5.Heating and cooling systems, if installed at the time of the test, shall be turned off.
6. 6.Supply and return registers, if installed at the time of the test, shall be fully open.

R402.4.2 Fireplaces.

New wood-burning fireplaces shall have tight-fitting flue dampers or doors, and outdoor combustion air. Where using tight-fitting doors on factory-built fireplaces listed and labeled in accordance with UL 127, the doors shall be tested and listed for the fireplace. Where using tight-fitting doors on masonry fireplaces, the doors shall be listed and labeled in accordance with UL 907.

R402.4.3 Fenestration air leakage.

Windows, skylights and sliding glass doors shall have an air infiltration rate of no more than 0.3 cfm per square foot (1.5 L/s/m²), and swinging doors no more than 0.5 cfm per square foot (2.6 L/s/m²), when tested according to NFRC 400 or AAMA/WDMA/CSA 101/I.S.2/A440 by an accredited, independent laboratory and listed and labeled by the manufacturer.

Exception: Site-built windows, skylights and doors.

R402.4.4 Rooms containing fuel-burning appliances.

In Climate Zones 3 through 8, where open combustion air ducts provide combustion air to open combustion fuel burning appliances, the appliances and combustion air opening shall be located outside the building thermal envelope or enclosed in a room, isolated from inside the thermal envelope. Such rooms shall be sealed and insulated in accordance with the envelope requirements of Table R402.1.2, where the walls, floors and ceilings shall meet not less than the basement wall R-value requirement. The door into the room shall be fully gasketed and any water lines and ducts in the room insulated in accordance with Section R403. The combustion air duct shall be insulated where it passes through conditioned space to a minimum of R-8.

Exceptions:

1. Direct vent appliances with both intake and exhaust pipes installed continuous to the outside.
2. Fireplaces and stoves complying with Section R402.4.2 and Section R1006 of the International Residential Code.

R402.4.5 Recessed lighting.

Recessed luminaires installed in the building thermal envelope shall be sealed to limit air leakage between conditioned and unconditioned spaces. All recessed luminaires shall be IC-rated and labeled as having an air leakage rate not more than 2.0 cfm (0.944 L/s) when tested in accordance with ASTM E 283 at a 1.57 psf (75 Pa) pressure differential. All recessed luminaires shall be sealed with a gasket or caulk between the housing and the interior wall or ceiling covering.

R402.5 Maximum fenestration U-factor and SHGC (Mandatory).

The area-weighted average maximum fenestration U-factor permitted using tradeoffs from Section R402.1.5 or R405 shall be 0.48 in Climate Zones 4 and 5 and 0.40 in Climate Zones 6 through 8 for vertical fenestration, and 0.75 in Climate Zones 4 through 8 for skylights. The area-weighted average maximum fenestration solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC) permitted using tradeoffs from Section R405 in Climate Zones 1 through 3 shall be 0.50.

TABLE R402.4.1.1 AIR BARRIER AND INSULATION INSTALLATION

COMPONENT	AIR BARRIER CRITERIA	INSULATION INSTALLATION CRITERIA
General requirements	A continuous air barrier shall be installed in the building envelope. The exterior thermal envelope contains a continuous air barrier. Breaks or joints in the air barrier shall be sealed.	Air-permeable insulation shall not be used as a sealing material.
Ceiling/attic	The air barrier in any dropped ceiling/soffit shall be aligned with the insulation and any gaps in the air barrier shall be sealed. Access openings, drop down stairs or knee wall doors to unconditioned attic spaces shall be sealed.	The insulation in any dropped ceiling/soffit shall be aligned with the air barrier.
Walls	The junction of the foundation and sill plate shall be sealed. The junction of the top plate and the top of exterior walls shall be sealed. Knee walls shall be sealed.	Cavities within corners and headers of frame walls shall be insulated by completely filling the cavity with a material having a thermal resistance of R-3 per inch minimum. Exterior thermal envelope insulation for framed walls shall be installed in substantial contact and continuous alignment with the air barrier.
Windows, skylights and doors	The space between window/door jambs and framing, and skylights and framing shall be sealed.	
Rim joists	Rim joists shall include the air barrier.	Rim joists shall be insulated.
Floors (including above garage and cantilevered floors)	The air barrier shall be installed at any exposed edge of insulation.	Floor framing cavity insulation shall be installed to maintain permanent contact with the underside of subfloor decking, or floor framing cavity insulation shall be permitted to be in contact with the top side of sheathing, or continuous insulation installed on the underside of floor framing and extends from the bottom to the top of all perimeter floor framing members.
Crawl space walls	Exposed earth in unvented crawl spaces shall be covered with a Class I vapor retarder with overlapping joints taped.	Where provided instead of floor insulation, insulation shall be permanently attached to the crawlspace walls.

Shafts, penetrations	Duct shafts, utility penetrations, and flue shafts opening to exterior or unconditioned space shall be sealed.	
Narrow cavities		Batts in narrow cavities shall be cut to fit, or narrow cavities shall be filled by insulation that on installation readily conforms to the available cavity space.
Garage separation	Air sealing shall be provided between the garage and conditioned spaces.	
Recessed lighting	Recessed light fixtures installed in the building thermal envelope shall be sealed to the drywall.	Recessed light fixtures installed in the building thermal envelope shall be air tight and IC rated.
Plumbing and wiring		Batt insulation shall be cut neatly to fit around wiring and plumbing in exterior walls, or insulation that on installation readily conforms to available space shall extend behind piping and wiring.
Shower/tub on exterior wall	The air barrier installed at exterior walls adjacent to showers and tubs shall separate them from the showers and tubs.	Exterior walls adjacent to showers and tubs shall be insulated.
Electrical/phone box on exterior walls	The air barrier shall be installed behind electrical or communication boxes or air-sealed boxes shall be installed.	
HVAC register boots	HVAC register boots that penetrate building thermal envelope shall be sealed to the subfloor or drywall.	
Concealed sprinklers	When required to be sealed, concealed fire sprinklers shall only be sealed in a manner that is recommended by the manufacturer. Caulking or other adhesive sealants shall not be used to fill voids between fire sprinkler cover plates and walls or ceilings.	