

## CHAPTER 5

# EXISTING BUILDINGS

### SECTION R501 GENERAL

**R501.1 Scope.** The provisions of this chapter shall control the *alteration, repair, addition* and change of occupancy of existing buildings and structures.

**R501.1.1 General.** Except as specified in this chapter, this code shall not be used to require the removal, *alteration* or abandonment of, nor prevent the continued use and maintenance of, an existing building or building system lawfully in existence at the time of adoption of this code. Unaltered portions of the existing building or building supply system shall not be required to comply with this code.

**R501.1.2 Thermostats for accessory dwelling units.** Where a separate dwelling unit, that provides independent facilities for living, sleeping, cooking, bathing and sanitation, is established within or attached to an existing dwelling unit, the heating and cooling for the newly-created dwelling unit shall be controllable with a separate programmable thermostat in accordance with Section R403.1.1.

**R501.2 Compliance.** Additions, alterations, repairs or changes of occupancy to, or relocation of, an existing building, building system or portion thereof shall comply with Sections R502, R503, R504 or R505, respectively, in this code. Changes where unconditioned space is changed to conditioned space shall comply with Section R502.

**R501.3 Maintenance.** Buildings and structures, and parts thereof, shall be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition. Devices and systems that are required by this code shall be maintained in conformance with the code edition under which installed. The owner or the owner's authorized agent shall be responsible for the maintenance of buildings and structures. The requirements of this chapter shall not provide the basis for removal or abrogation of energy conservation, fire protection and safety systems and devices in existing structures.

**R501.4 Compliance.** *Alterations, repairs, additions* and changes of occupancy to, or relocation of, existing buildings and structures shall comply with the provisions for *alterations, repairs, additions* and changes of occupancy or relocation, respectively, in this code and the *International Residential Code, International Building Code, International Existing Building Code, International Fire Code, International Fuel Gas Code, International Mechanical Code, Uniform Plumbing Code, International Property Maintenance Code*, and ((NFPA 70)) Seattle Electrical Code.

**R501.5 New and replacement materials.** Except as otherwise required or permitted by this code, materials permitted by the applicable code for new construction shall be used. Like materials shall be permitted for repairs, provided hazards to life, health or property are not created. Hazardous materials shall not be used where the code for new construction would not permit their use in buildings of similar occupancy, purpose and location.

**R501.6 Historic buildings.** The *code official* may modify the specific requirements of this code for historic buildings and require alternative provisions which will result in a reasonable degree of energy efficiency. This modification may be allowed for those buildings or structures that are listed in the state or national register of historic places; designated as a historic property under local or state designation law or survey; certified as a contributing resource with a national register listed or locally designated historic district; or with an opinion or certification that the property is eligible to be listed on the national or state registers of historic places either individually or as a contributing building to a historic district by the state historic preservation officer or the keeper of the national register of historic places.

### SECTION R502 ADDITIONS

**R502.1 General.** Additions to an existing building, building system or portion thereof shall conform to the provisions of this code as those provisions relate to new construction without requiring the unaltered portion of the existing building or building system to comply with this code, except as specified in this chapter. Additions shall not create an unsafe or hazardous condition or overload existing building systems. An addition shall be deemed to comply with this code where the addition alone complies, where the existing building and addition comply with this code as a single building, or where the building with the addition uses no more energy than the existing building. Additions shall be in accordance with Section R502.3 or R502.4.

**R502.1.1 Small additions.** *Additions* not greater than 150 square feet (13.9 m<sup>2</sup>) shall not be required to comply with Section R406.

**R502.2 Change in space conditioning.** Any nonconditioned or low-energy space that is altered to become *conditioned space* shall be required to be brought into full compliance with this code.

## SCOPE AND ADMINISTRATION

**Exception:** Where the total building performance option in Section R405 is used to comply with this section, the annual energy use of the proposed design is permitted to be 110 percent of the annual energy use otherwise allowed by Section R405.3.

**R502.3 Prescriptive compliance.** Additions shall comply with Sections R502.3.1 through R502.3.4.

**R502.3.1 Building envelope.** New building envelope assemblies that are part of the addition shall comply with Sections R402.1, R402.2, R402.3.1 through R402.3.5, and R402.4.

**Exception:** Where nonconditioned space is changed to conditioned space, the building envelope of the addition shall comply where the UA, as determined in Section R402.1.5, of the existing building and the addition, and any alterations that are part of the project, is less than or equal to the UA generated for the existing building.

**R502.3.1.1 Existing ceilings with attic spaces.** Where an *addition* greater than 150 square feet (13.9 m<sup>2</sup>) adjoins existing ceilings with attic spaces, the existing attic spaces shall comply with Section R402.

**R502.3.2 Heating and cooling systems.** HVAC ducts newly installed as part of an *addition* shall comply with Section R403.

**Exception:** The following need not comply with the testing requirements of Section R403.3.3:

1. *Additions* of less than 150 square feet.
2. Duct systems that are documented to have been previously sealed as confirmed through field verification and diagnostic testing in accordance with procedures in WSU RS-33.
3. Existing duct systems constructed, insulated or sealed with asbestos.

**R502.3.3 Service hot water systems.** New service hot water systems that are part of the *addition* shall comply with Section R403.5.

**R502.3.4 Lighting.** New lighting systems that are part of the *addition* shall comply with Section 404.1.

**R502.4 Existing plus addition compliance (Total Building Performance).** Where nonconditioned space is changed to conditioned space the addition shall comply where the annual energy use of the addition and the existing building, and any alterations that are part of the project, is less than or equal to the annual energy use of the existing building when modeled in accordance with Section R405. The addition and any alterations that are part of the project shall comply with Section R405 in its entirety.

**SDCI Informative Note:** *Alterations* to existing buildings typically do not require R406 Energy Credits. However, Section R406.3 does require energy credits for *additions* larger than 150 square feet, and the Chapter 2 definition of “addition” includes any space, such as a garage or unheated basement, that is converted from unheated to heated space. Therefore, if an ADU (accessory dwelling unit) is created within existing heated space in a dwelling unit, it does not require energy credits. However, if creation of the ADU converts any unheated space to heated space, then all code requirements for additions apply, and if the space converted from unheated to heated is larger than 150 square feet, the R406.3 requirements for energy credits must also be met.

## SECTION R503 ALTERATIONS

**SDCI Informative Note:** For landmark buildings, see Section R101.6.

**R503.1 General.** *Alterations* to any building or structure shall comply with the requirements of the code for new construction, without requiring the unaltered portions of the existing building or building system to comply with this code. *Alterations* shall be such that the existing building or structure is no less conforming to the provisions of this code than the existing building or structure was prior to the *alteration*.

Alterations shall not create an unsafe or hazardous condition or overload existing building systems. *Alterations* shall be such that the existing building or structure uses no more energy than the existing building or structure prior to the *alteration*. Alterations to existing buildings shall comply with Section R503.1.1 through R503.1.4.

The *code official* may approve designs of alterations which do not fully conform to all of the requirements of this code where in the opinion of the *code official* full compliance is physically impossible and/or economically impractical and:

1. The alteration improves the energy efficiency of the building; or
2. The alteration is energy efficient and is necessary for the health, safety, and welfare of the general public.

**R503.1.1 Building envelope.** Building envelope assemblies that are part of the alteration shall comply with Section R402.1.3 or R402.1.5, Sections R402.2.1 through R402.2.10, R402.3.1, R402.3.2, R402.3.5, and R402.4.2.

**Exception:** The following alterations need not comply with the requirements for new construction provided the energy use of the building is not increased:

1. Storm windows installed over existing fenestration.
2. Existing ceiling, wall or floor cavities exposed during construction provided that these cavities are filled with insulation. 2x4 framed walls shall be insulated to a minimum of R-15 and 2x6 framed walls shall be insulated to a minimum of R-21.
3. Construction where the existing roof, wall or floor cavity is not exposed.
4. Roof recover.
5. Roofs without insulation in the cavity and where the sheathing or insulation is exposed during reroofing shall be insulated either above or below the sheathing.
6. Surface-applied window film installed on existing single pane fenestration assemblies to reduce solar heat gain provided the code does not require the glazing fenestration to be replaced.

**R503.1.1.1 Replacement fenestration.** Where some or all of an existing fenestration unit is replaced with a new fenestration product, including sash and glazing, the replacement fenestration unit shall meet the applicable requirements for *U*-factor and SHGC in Table R402.1.3. Where more than one replacement fenestration unit is being installed, an area-weighted average of the *U*-factor and SHGC of all replacement fenestration shall be permitted to be used to demonstrate compliance.

**R503.1.2 Heating and cooling systems.** New heating, cooling and duct systems that are part of the alteration shall comply with Section R403.

**Exceptions:**

1. Where ducts from an existing heating and cooling system are extended, duct systems with less than 40 linear feet in unconditioned spaces shall not be required to be tested in accordance with Section R403.2.2.
2. Existing duct systems constructed, insulated or sealed with asbestos.

**R503.1.3 Service hot water systems.** New service hot water systems that are part of the alteration shall comply with Section R403.5.

**Exception:** Replacement of water heating equipment shall not be required to comply with Section R403.5.5.

**R503.1.4 Lighting.** New lighting systems that are part of the alteration shall comply with Section R404.1.

**Exception:** Alterations that replace less than 10 percent of the luminaires in a space, provided that such alterations do not increase the installed interior lighting power.

## SECTION R504 REPAIRS

**R504.1 General.** Buildings, structures and parts thereof shall be repaired in compliance with Section R501.3 and this section. Work on nondamaged components that is necessary for the required *repair* of damaged components shall be considered part of the *repair* and shall not be subject to the requirements for *alterations* in this chapter. Routine maintenance required by Section R501.3, ordinary repairs exempt from *permit*, and abatement of wear due to normal service conditions shall not be subject to the requirements for *repairs* in this section.

The code official may approve designs of repairs which do not fully conform with all of the requirements of this code where in the opinion of the *code official* full compliance is physically impossible and/or economically impractical and:

1. The repair improves the energy efficiency of the building; or
2. The repair is energy efficient and is necessary for the health, safety, and welfare of the general public.

**R504.2 Application.** For the purposes of this code, the following shall be considered repairs.

1. Glass only replacements in an existing sash and frame.
2. Roof repairs.
3. Repairs where only the bulb and/or ballast within the existing luminaires in a space are replaced provided that the replacement does not increase the installed interior lighting power.

**SECTION R505  
CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY OR USE**

**R505.1 General.** Any space not within the scope of Section R101.2 which is converted to space that is within the scope of Section R101.2 shall be brought into full compliance with this code.

Spaces undergoing a change in occupancy that would result in an increase in demand for either fossil fuel or electrical energy shall comply with this code.

Any space that is converted to a dwelling unit or portion thereof from another use or occupancy shall comply with this code.

**Exception:** Where the simulated performance option in Section R405 is used to comply with this section, the annual energy use of the proposed design is permitted to be 110 percent of the annual energy use otherwise allowed by Section R405.3.

**R505.1.1 Unconditioned space.** Any unconditioned or low-energy space that is altered to become a *conditioned space* shall comply with Section R502.