

Town of Bristol



Planning & Zoning Department

Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES) FAQ

This is an overview of the Vermont RBES standards summarized from the Energy Code Handbook, Sixth Edition and seeks to provide information to homeowners and applicants. If you have specific questions please contact the Energy Code Assistance Center at 855-887-0673 or the VT Public Service Department at 802-828-2811.

What are the Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards?

The RBES are a set of energy codes that set a minimum standard for energy efficiency and have been applied to new residential buildings since 1998. There have been several updates to the code with the most recent update being in 2024. The RBES consist of a technical requirement and a certification requirement.

How does Governor Scott's Executive Order 06-25 apply?

On September 17, 2025 Governor Scott signed an executive order that gives those beginning a residential construction project the option to follow either the 2024 RBES or the 2020 RBES, which includes the 2020 Stretch Code. This applies to all new residential construction which include additions, alterations, renovations, and repairs, that begin on July 1, 2024 or after.

What Buildings Must Comply?

- New construction:
 - o Detached one and two family buildings
 - o Multi family buildings (3 stories or less)
- Projects of existing buildings that involve additions, alterations, renovations and repairs
- Modular homes if not on a permanent chassis
- Tiny Homes

Are there exemptions?

- Commercial Buildings (these buildings must comply with the Commercial Building Energy Standards)
- High-rise residential buildings, which have 4 or more stories. (these must comply with the CBES)
- Mobile Homes on a permanent chassis (site built components, like conditioned basements or crawl spaces are not exempt)
- Buildings or additions with very low energy use
- Unconditioned buildings – buildings that are not heated or cooled
- Hunting or summer camps
- Yurts with only biomass or other on site renewable heating and hot water systems
- Historic buildings (individual provisions can be exempted)

How do I certify that I've followed the RBES?

Vermont has one of few codes where the builder self-certifies compliance with the RBES. There are two types of certification. Projects that meet the technical requirements of the code fill out the Vermont Residential Building Energy Standard Certification. Projects that qualify for the Owner/Builder Special Provision and have projects that do not meet the technical requirements fill out the Owner/Builder Disclosure Statement. Both of types of certifications must be filed with the town clerk. It costs \$15 per page for recordings.

How does the RBES apply to local zoning permits?

For towns that require of certificate of occupancy, an RBES certificate must be recorded in the Town before the certificate can be issued.

In Bristol permits require certificate of compliance prior to legal occupancy. To prevent delays in occupancy after project completion required certificates should be filed prior to requesting a certificate of compliance.