

Overview of the 2021 Washington State Energy Code: Research Memorandum

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[Anthony Godwin](#) (Associate, Seattle) and Arlington Schade (Law Clerk, Seattle) penned a research memorandum on updates to the 2021 Washington State Energy Code.

In 2009, the Washington State legislature enacted Senate Bill 5854, which set a goal for “residential and nonresidential construction permitted under the 2031 state energy code” to “achieve a seventy percent reduction in annual net energy consumption” using the 2006 code as a baseline. The statute directs SBCC to adopt incremental energy codes between 2013 and 2031 to move toward this goal. Pursuant to this legislation, SBCC regularly updates the Energy Code. Amendments are typically based on the model International Energy Conservation Code, but some changes are unique to Washington.

The Energy Code operates through a system of building design standards and energy efficiency requirements. These include prescriptive provisions as well as a credit-based compliance pathway, such as those found in Section C406 of the Energy Code, which assigns values to various energy efficiency strategies. The credit system allows developers flexibility in meeting the code by choosing from a menu of efficiency options, provided that a minimum number of credits is achieved.

The research memorandum provides a history and overview of the energy code and examines when and how the code applies to additions, alterations and repairs to existing buildings.

For a deeper look into the Washington State Energy Code, continue reading Anthony and Arlington’s research memorandum [here](#).

Contact

Anthony Godwin
Arlington Schade

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