

Building and Plumbing Newsflash 583

Commencement of updated Queensland Development Code Mandatory Part 4.1–Sustainable buildings on 1 March 2021

Purpose

To advise commencement of the [updated Queensland Development Code Mandatory Part 4.1–Sustainable buildings](#) (QDC 4.1) takes effect **1 March 2021**.

Background

Revised energy efficiency requirements for buildings commenced 1 May 2020 under the National Construction Code (NCC) 2019. However, the provisions for residential buildings were delayed in Queensland at that time due to the significant impact of COVID-19 on the construction industry and new homeowners. In Queensland, QDC 4.1 overrides the relevant NCC 2019 provisions.

NCC 2019 introduced separate heating and cooling annual load limits when using the house energy rating software method to comply with the residential dwelling energy efficiency (star rating) requirements.

The load limits will improve the year-round performance and occupant comfort of new dwellings by ensuring that dwellings are designed to be neither too hot in summer nor too cold in winter.

Other changes for residential buildings with NCC 2019 included greater prescription around the method for the Verification Using a Reference Building (VURB) compliance option.

For commercial buildings, the NCC 2019 energy efficiency provisions under 'Section J' in Volume One have applied in Queensland since 1 May 2020.

Updated QDC 4.1

The [updated QDC 4.1](#) introduces separate heating and cooling annual load limits for new residential dwellings, both houses (class 1 buildings) and sole-occupancy units (SOUs) in multi-unit residential buildings (class 2). This approach aligns QDC 4.1 with NCC 2019's energy efficiency provisions. The load limits are an additional requirement to the minimum star ratings for residential dwellings when using the software compliance option.

The updated QDC is also consistent with NCC 2019's methodology for the VURB compliance option.

There is no change to Queensland's minimum energy efficiency standards under QDC 4.1 for new houses (6-stars) and units (5-stars average for all SOUs in the building). The optional credits provided for outdoor living areas and photovoltaic (solar) energy systems will also continue to be available for compliance purposes.

Transitional building arrangements

Subject to transitional provisions contained in section 37 of the *Building Act 1975*, building applications lodged on or after 1 March 2021 need to comply with the updated QDC 4.1.

Building certifiers may exercise limited discretion to allow a building application to comply with the previous version of QDC 4.1. This can include situations where the building certifier is satisfied that planning of the

work was underway before 1 March 2021 (e.g. a contract to build is in place or substantial negotiations for planning the building work has taken place).

Supporting information

The [Handbook for Energy Efficiency](#) published by the Australian Building Codes Board provides details about how to apply the separate heating and cooling annual load limits to residential dwellings for compliance processes, including worked examples (see Section 7.6).

More information

For further information on energy efficient dwellings visit:

- Queensland's [energy assessments for new dwellings](#)
- National Construction Code – [Volume Two](#) for new houses and [Volume One](#) for new units
- Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme ([NatHERS](#)), including its approved software tools
- [Your Home](#) for detailed information on energy efficient design features for residential dwellings.

Contact us

Building Legislation and Policy
Department of Energy and Public Works
Email: BLP@hpw.qld.gov.au

If you have not received this newsflash directly from Building Legislation and Policy, you can subscribe via bcgnewsflash@qld.gov.au.

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this Newsflash is provided by the Queensland Government, through the Department of Energy and Public Works ('the department') as an information source only. The information is general in nature and the department makes no statements, representations, or warranties about the accuracy, quality, reliability, adequacy or completeness of any information contained in this Newsflash. It is not to be relied on as a substitute for consulting the relevant legislation or for obtaining appropriate professional advice relevant to your particular circumstances. The department disclaims all responsibility and all liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages and costs (including consequential or indirect loss or damage or loss of profits) you might incur as a result of the information being inaccurate, inadequate or incomplete in any way, and for any reason.