

Base Code (IECC 2021)

- New construction in towns & cities not a green community
- 50 communities** (9% of pop)

Expected from BBRS: **Jan 2025**

Stretch Code (2023 update)

- New construction in towns & cities that are a green or stretch community
- 270 communities** (66% of pop)

Residential: Jan '23
July '24
Commercial: July '23

Specialized Code ("Net-Zero")

- New Construction in towns & cities that vote to opt-in to this code
- 31 communities** (25% of pop)
- Effective date:** Typically 6-11 months after Town/City vote



Specialized vs Stretch code - Residential Low-Rise

Energy Source(s)	Home Size	Stretch code (July 2024)	Specialized Code (Jan 2024)
→ All Electric New Homes	Any Size home	HERS 45 or Passivehouse	
Mixed-Fuel New Homes	Under 4,000 sq ft	HERS 42	+Solar PV (min 4kw) + wiring for electrification
	4,000 sq ft and over	HERS 42	+ Solar PV (to net-zero) + wiring for electrification
	Any	Passivehouse option	+ wiring for electrification
→ Home additions & alterations	Any	Same as Stretch code	
→ Historic or Existing homes	Any	Energy Code exemption if it would damage the historic fabric of the building	

Frequently Asked Questions

1 Does the Opt-In Specialized Code apply to existing structures?

No. Improvements to existing structures, depending on size, are regulated by the Updated Stretch Code and Base Code.

2 Will the Opt-In-Specialized Code discourage the creation of affordable housing?

No. Incentives will continue to encourage affordable housing while the Opt-In Specialized Code delivers benefits for residents.

3 Is it possible to install a gas cooktop?

Yes. This is permitted under the Mixed Fuel pathways.

4 Why adopt the Opt-In Specialized Code?

The #1 reason is that it requires pre-wiring, avoiding costly retrofits down the road and expediting electrification.

5 Why does the Opt-In Specialized Code permit fossil fuels?

It preserves market choice at a time when utility pricing is highly volatile and utility costs vary 300% among MA communities. “Net zero” definitions vary widely.