

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-20-02

October 24, 2002

The following is offered in response to your letter to me dated October 21, 2002 in which you seek an interpretation of the requirements of Chapter 5 of the 1995 CABO Model Energy Code portion of the 1999 State Building Code.

Question: When following the Chapter 5 Component Performance Approach, is it necessary to provide a minimum U_o value for each component as found in Figures 1 through 6 of Chapter 8?

Answer: No. The referenced code, at section 502.1.1, allows the U_o of a component to be increased or decreased as long as the heat loss or gain for the entire building does not exceed the total resulting from conformance to the values specified in Table 502.2.1a (which relies on the figures in Chapter 8). So, you see, the figures in Chapter 8 are there to establish the benchmark against which the proposed design must be evaluated. It is acceptable to reduce or even eliminate the value of insulation in any given component as long as the deficiency in that particular component is made up for by upgrading a different component. Thus, it is possible, for example, to completely eliminate the insulation in the floor of a building by increasing the amount of insulation in the roof, ceiling or walls. MEC-Check is a common software tool that can be used to evaluate the Component Performance Approach. Assuming the correct values are used, and all components (including those with reduced or no insulation) are evaluated, a passing score on MEC-Check equates to compliance with the Model Energy Code.