



2025-2026 Building Standards Documents

Summary of Changes

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Background

This summary of changes document provides a brief overview of updates to the April 2025-2026 version of the Multifamily Rental Housing Design/Construction Standards (RHD/CS), the Minnesota Overlay to the Enterprise Green Communities Criteria (MN Overlay), and the Contractor's Guide. It also introduces the new Environmental Standards document. This summary of changes is only a quick-reference overview; please reference the actual revised RHD/CS, MN Overlay, Contractor's Guide, and Environmental Standards for full understanding of changes and requirements. These documents can be found on Minnesota Housing's [Building Standards](#) webpage.

Minnesota Housing document revision is now on a two-year schedule. This change aligns document revisions with our Housing Tax Credits Qualification Plan (QAP). The documents released in April of 2025 will be applicable to 2025-2026 Consolidated RFP funded projects and 2026-2027 Housing Tax Credit allocations.

Rental Housing Design/Construction Standards (RHD/CS)

Chapter 2 – General Occupancy New Construction Minimum Standards

Section 2.03 Requirements

A clarification for measuring room sizes, area, and dimensions has been added.

Section 2.03.E. Play Area/Play Equipment

An exception for when play areas are required has been added. A play area is no longer required for scattered site developments whereby the number of units in proximity is limited (<12).

Section 2.03.P. Mechanical and Plumbing Systems

Kitchen sink requirements have been changed to read as follows:

All kitchen sinks may be single bowl or double bowl and must be appropriately sized for the anticipated resident household with the following minimum dimensions:

- Depth 7" minimum. Note: At accessible units and other locations where the kitchen sink is required to have an open area below, a depth of 5" minimum may be used.
- Width 30" (overall sink unit) minimum at 2 bedroom or larger dwelling units.
- Width 22" (overall sink unit) minimum at Efficiency and 1 bedroom dwelling units where a single bowl sink is provided.

Section 2.03.R. Millwork

Solid surface counter tops (manufactured quartz, natural stone, concrete, etc.) are now allowed at dwelling unit kitchens and common area locations if the kitchen sink base cabinet includes a drip pan or leak/liner protection.

Section 2.03.S. Exterior Windows and Doors

An exception for the current ENERGY STAR (ES) qualified windows and doors version 7 has been added. Rehabilitation projects may use ES qualified windows and doors version 6. Version 7 will most likely result in triple pane windows, whereas version 6 may be achieved with double pane windows.

Section 2.03.T. Roofing

A hot asphalt adhered fleece-backed ethylene propylene diene monomer (EPDM) roof system is now allowed.

Chapter 3 – General Occupancy Rehabilitation Minimum Standards

Section 3.04.A. Substantial Rehabilitation

The Substantial Rehabilitation definition has been revised to mirror the 2015 Minnesota Conservation Code for Existing Buildings Section 505 Level 3 Alteration.

Section 3.05.A. Needs Assessment Requirements

A Property Needs Assessment (PNA) and Capital Needs Assessment (CNA) exception for condemned properties has been added and reads as follows:

Properties which have been condemned, such that the building or structure is immediately dangerous to the health, welfare and safety of the occupants or the public, as deemed by a governmental entity with authority to do so, are not required to provide a PNA or CNA. If a condemnation can be remedied with rehabilitation, any components that remain untouched (roof, exterior windows/doors, masonry, exterior walls, site elements, utilities, etc.) must have their age, expected useful life, and condition explained through a scope of work narrative provided at application.

Section 3.05.C. Site and Roof Drainage Requirements and Inspections

A permanent site sign is now required for rehabilitation projects.

Section 3.05.K. Electrical Systems Inspections

Arc-fault circuit-interrupter (AFCI) protection has been updated to reconcile with the electrical code.

Chapter 5 – Accessibility, Universal Design, and Senior Housing Standards

Section 5.05 Requirements for New Construction with Five or More Housing Units Selected to Receive Housing Infrastructure Assistance

This section has been added to clarify requirements with this funding source.

Chapter 7 – Design, Construction, and Property Standards for Federally Funded Projects

Section 7.05 Build America, Buy America Act

This section has been added to provide direction for Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act requirements.

Chapter 9 – Energy Rebate Analysis

This chapter has been added to explain energy rebate analysis requirements.

Multifamily (Rental Housing) Minnesota Overlay and Guide to the 2020 Enterprise Green Communities Criteria™ (Multifamily MN Overlay)

Minnesota Housing Single Family Division funded project requirements have been removed. This Multifamily MN Overlay is now only applicable for projects funded through Minnesota Housing's Multifamily Division.

Chapter 2 – Project and Rehabilitation Type

Section 2.02 Rehabilitation (Rehab) Types

The Substantial Rehabilitation definition has been revised as follows:

1. Where the work area exceeds 50% of the Aggregate Area of the building defined per the 2020 Minnesota Conservation Code for Existing Buildings, Section 604 Level 3 Alteration.
2. Gut rehabilitation meeting the definition noted above must be considered Substantial Rehab.

Chapter 3 – Certification Programs and Enhanced Sustainability

Section 3.02 ENERGY STAR Certification

A more rigorous version of ENERGY STAR (ES) certification is now required for Multifamily funded projects. ES Certified Homes must certify to version 3.2. ES Multifamily New Construction must certify to version 1.2.

Section 3.03 Enhanced Sustainability

This section has been revised to reflect changes in the current Qualified Action Plan and Consolidated RFP Self-Scoring Worksheet. Tier point totals are summarized as follows:

- Tier 1 = 2 Selection Points (Tier 2 not eligible if selecting Tier 1)
- Tier 2 = 4 Selection Points (Tier 1 not eligible if selecting Tier 2)
- Tier 3 = 6 Selection Points
- Tier 4 = 8 Selection Points
- Tier 1 + Tier 3 = 8 Selection Points
- Tier 2 + Tier 3 = 10 Selection Points
- Tier 1 + Tier 4 = 10 Selection Points
- Tier 2 + Tier 4 = 12 Selection Points

Chapter 6 – Multifamily (MF) MN Overlay to Enterprise Green Communities Criteria™

Criteria 1.8: Education on Actionable Solutions for Healthier Material Selection

New criteria have been added with 4 optional points for attending online training.

Criteria 5.1a: Building Performance Standards

Requirements have been updated to reflect more rigorous ES certification requirements noted in section 3.02.

Criteria 5.1b: Building Performance Standard

MN Sustainability Guidelines B3-SB2030 Pathway has been added for compliance with these criteria.

Prescriptive Pathway has been updated to reflect higher efficiency requirements.

Criteria 5.2b: Moving to Zero Energy: Near Zero Certification

Passive House Institute United States (Phius) REVIVE 2024 has been added as a pathway to claim 20 optional points.

Criteria 5.4: Achieving Zero Energy

Phius ZERO REVIVE 2021 has been added as a pathway to claim 20 optional points.

Criteria 5.5: Moving to Zero Carbon: Electrification

Requirements for new construction have been revised to include mandatory requirements of space heating electric ready, electric space cooling, water heating electric ready, electric clothes drying, and electric equipment for cooking.

Criteria 6.4: Healthy Materials Selection

These criteria have been revised to follow the Informed Assessment form by Habitable for optional points.

Criteria 7.14: Climate Resilient Construction

New criteria have been added for up to 17 optional points for projects including FORTIFIED Designation by the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety.

Criteria 8.5: Energy and Water Data Collection and Monitoring

These criteria have been revised with changes to the mandatory requirements for owner-paid utilities. There are now 5 optional points for aggregated, whole-property utility data.

Contractor's Guide

Chapter 2 – Formal Application

Section 2.02 Contractor's Role

The Contractor's role has been revised. Special notice of the following revised text:

- A. Conduct a site visit and assist the applicant in formulating a preliminary estimate of construction costs.
 - 1. Cost estimates must be in a schedule of values format with major systems and components itemized.
 - 2. Cost estimates must include general conditions, winter conditions (if any), overhead, profit, and any other work typically included in the construction contract.
 - 3. Cost estimates cannot include construction contingency. However, with Minnesota Housing approval, they may include reasonable time-related inflationary allowance, winter conditions allowances, masonry repair allowances, roof-replacement underlayment allowances, soil corrections allowances, environmental remediation allowances, etc.

See the full language in the Contractor's Guide.

Chapter 5 – Owner-Contractor Agreement Requirements

Section 5.02 Owner-Contractor Agreement Requirements

An exception to a stipulated sum requirement has been added as follows:

Exception: Per Chapter 4 – Housing Tax Credits (HTC) Only Design and Construction Standards of our Rental Housing Design/Construction Standards, a lump sum agreement is not required. Other forms of contractor compensation (for example, cost of work plus a fee, or guaranteed maximum plus contracts) are allowed for 4% and 9% HTC Only funded projects.

Chapter 8 – Construction Administration

Section 8.03 Contractor's Role

A Contractor's application and certificate for payment (AIA Documents G702 and G703 or other Minnesota Housing approved payment application) is required. However, the following requirements have been added:

- The schedule of values in the pay application and certificate for payment must not change unless changed via a change order. The schedule values line items must remain as approved at loan commitment/loan closing; however, the value may be adjusted in a “Current/Adjusted” column in the G703 Continuation Sheet.
- All approved change orders included in a pay application must be itemized as separate schedule of values line item or noted/listed elsewhere in the pay application in a format approved by Minnesota Housing.

Environmental Standards

This is a new document. Previously this information was a webpage available on our Minnesota Housing website. The Environmental Standards include guidelines for:

- Environmental Site Assessments
- Subsurface Soil Exploration
- Mold
- Lead-Based Paint
- The Asbestos Inspection Survey
- Radon Mitigation
- Historic Preservation Rehabilitation
- Clandestine Drug Lab Cleanup

Housing Tax Credit (HTC) Only environmental requirements for 4% HTC and 9% HTC are now different. See Chapter 4 of the Rental Housing Design/Construction Standards for more information.