

# NYC GREEN CODES LEGISLATION AT A GLANCE



EF5

## **GCTF Proposal**

Allow External Insulation Beyond Zoning Limits

## **Enacted**

Zone Green Text Amendment

## **Summary**

Insulating the exterior of a building is often the most effective way to reduce heat transfer and fuel consumption. Some techniques have the added value of creating an air barrier. But many buildings are built up to the zoning yard, open area and setback limits, making it impossible to add insulation to the exterior.

The Zone Green Text Amendment allows existing buildings to add insulation to their exterior that extends over required yards, setbacks or open areas without counting towards floor area or lot coverage. It also allows external insulation above the maximal building height.

Moderately priced panels used at the allowed thickness can readily achieve R-30 or greater. This super-insulation is similar to that necessary to meet Passive House Standard in NYC's temperature zone.

## **New Requirements or Changes**

**Effective: April 30, 2012.** These changes do not create new zoning requirements. Instead they remove zoning barriers to adding insulation to existing buildings.

*Amendments to the Zoning Resolution:*

- For walls existing prior to April 30, 2012, up to 8 inches of external insulation may be excluded from floor area and lot coverage, and allowed as a permitted obstruction in required yards, setbacks or other open areas such as courts or plazas, provided the additional wall thickness has an average R value of 1.5 per inch or greater. Up to 8 inches of external insulation may also project above the maximum building height. (Other changes noted in *EF 4 Promote Super-Insulated Walls* exclude this insulation from floor area calculations.)
- For open areas with a depth of 8 feet or less, external insulation is limited to 1 inch for every 1 foot of depth of such yard, setback, or open area. If this area is shared between adjacent zoning lots, the permitted addition of external insulation on each zoning lot is proportional to the depth of the open area on that zoning lot. (For instance, if one property has a 6 foot deep side yard and the adjoining property has a 2 foot deep side yard, then the first property is allowed to add 6 inches of external insulation, and the other property is allowed to add 2 inches of external insulation.)
- These provisions also apply to existing buildings that have non-complying yards,

setbacks or other open areas.

- Enlargements of a building - horizontally or vertically - with external insulation added is permitted to exceed yard, setback or building height limits to the depth of the added external insulation, up to 8 inches, provided that the enlargement does not exceed 100% of the existing floor area on the zoning lot.

### **Enforcement**

This amendment will be enforced by the Department of Buildings in the same manner as any other element of the Zoning Resolution.

### **Implementation**

This Zoning amendment reduces impediments and is not expected to have any impact on capital costs. There are no implementation or market barriers to this change.