

(Effective until July 1, 2020)

WAC 51-11C-40241 Section C402.5.1—Air barriers.

C402.5.1 Air barriers. A continuous air barrier shall be provided throughout the building thermal envelope. The air barriers shall be permitted to be located on the inside or outside of the building envelope, located within the assemblies composing the envelope, or any combination thereof. The air barrier shall comply with Sections C402.5.1.1 and C402.5.1.2.

C402.5.1.1 Air barrier construction. The *continuous air barrier* shall be constructed to comply with the following:

1. The air barrier shall be continuous for all assemblies that are the thermal envelope of the building and across the joints and assemblies.

2. Air barrier joints and seams shall be sealed, including sealing transitions in places and changes in materials. The joints and seals shall be securely installed in or on the joint for its entire length so as not to dislodge, loosen or otherwise impair its ability to resist positive and negative pressure from wind, stack effect and mechanical ventilation.

3. Penetrations of the air barrier shall be caulked, gasketed or otherwise sealed in a manner compatible with the construction materials and location. Joints and seals associated with penetrations shall be sealed in the same manner or taped or covered with moisture vapor-permeable wrapping material. Sealing materials shall be appropriate to the construction materials being sealed and shall be securely installed around the penetration so as not to dislodge, loosen or otherwise impair the penetrations' ability to resist positive and negative pressure from wind, stack effect, and mechanical ventilation. Sealing of concealed fire sprinklers, where required, shall be in a manner that is recommended by the manufacturer. Caulking or other adhesive sealants shall not be used to fill voids between fire sprinkler cover plates and walls or ceilings.

4. Recessed lighting fixtures shall comply with Section C402.5.8. Where similar objects are installed which penetrate the air barrier, provisions shall be made to maintain the integrity of the air barrier.

5. Construction documents shall contain a diagram showing the building's pressure boundary in plan(s) and section(s) and a calculation of the area of the pressure boundary to be considered in the test.

C402.5.1.2 Building test. The completed building shall be tested and the air leakage rate of the *building envelope* shall not exceed 0.40 cfm/ft² at a pressure differential of 0.3 inches water gauge (2.0 L/s • m² at 75 Pa) at the upper 95 percent confidence interval in accordance with ASTM E 779 or an equivalent method approved by the code official. A report that includes the tested surface area, floor area, air by volume, stories above grade, and leakage rates shall be submitted to the building owner and the Code Official. If the tested rate exceeds that defined here, a visual inspection of the air barrier shall be conducted and any leaks noted shall be sealed to the extent practicable. An additional report identifying the corrective actions taken to seal air leaks shall be submitted to the building owner and the Code Official and any further requirement to meet the leakage air rate will be waived.

1. Test shall be accomplished using either (1) both pressurization and depressurization or (2) pressurization alone, but not depressurization alone. The test results shall be plotted against the corrected P in accordance with Section 9.4 of ASTM E 779.

2. The test pressure range shall be from 25 Pa to 80 Pa per Section 8.10 of ASTM E 779, but the upper limit shall not be less than 50 Pa, and the difference between the upper and lower limit shall not be less than 25 Pa.

3. If the pressure exponent n is less than 0.45 or greater than 0.85 per Section 9.6.4 of ASTM E 779, the test shall be rerun with additional readings over a longer time interval.

C402.5.1.2.1 Building test for mixed-use buildings. Where a building is three or fewer stories above grade plane and contains both commercial and residential uses, the air barrier of the R-2 and R-3 occupancy areas of the building is permitted to be separately tested according to Section R402.4.1.2. Alternatively, it is permissible to test the air barrier of the entire building according to Section C402.5.1.2, provided that the tested air leakage rate does not exceed the rate specified in Section C402.5.1.2.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 19.27A.025, 19.27A.160, and 19.27.074. WSR 16-03-072, § 51-11C-40241, filed 1/19/16, effective 7/1/16. Statutory Authority: RCW 19.27A.020, 19.27A.025 and chapters 19.27 and 34.05 RCW. WSR 13-04-056, § 51-11C-40241, filed 2/1/13, effective 7/1/13.]

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3. Penetrations of the air barrier shall be caulked, gasketed or otherwise sealed in a manner compatible with the construction materials and location. Sealing shall allow for expansion, contraction and mechanical vibration. Joints and seams associated with penetrations shall be sealed in the same manner or taped. Sealing materials shall be securely installed around the penetration so as not to dislodge, loosen or otherwise impair the penetrations' ability to resist positive and negative pressure from wind, stack effect, and mechanical ventilation. Sealing of concealed fire sprinklers, where required,

shall be in a manner that is recommended by the manufacturer. Caulking or other adhesive sealants shall not be used to fill voids between fire sprinkler cover plates and walls or ceilings.

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5. Construction documents shall contain a diagram showing the building's pressure boundary in plan(s) and section(s) and a calculation of the area of the pressure boundary to be considered in the test.

C402.5.1.2 Building test. The completed building shall be tested and the air leakage rate of the *building envelope* shall not exceed 0.25 cfm/ft² at a pressure differential of 0.3 inches water gauge (2.0 L/s • m² at 75 Pa) at the upper 95 percent confidence interval in accordance with ASTM E 779 or an equivalent method approved by the code official. A report that includes the tested surface area, floor area, air by volume, stories above grade, and leakage rates shall be submitted to the building owner and the Code Official. If the tested rate exceeds that defined here by up to 0.15 cfm/ft², a visual inspection of the air barrier shall be conducted and any leaks noted shall be sealed to the extent practicable. An additional report identifying the corrective actions taken to seal air leaks shall be submitted to the building owner and the Code Official and any further requirement to meet the leakage air rate will be waived. If the tested rate exceeds 0.40 cfm/ft², corrective actions must be made and the test completed again. A test above 0.40 cfm/ft² will not be accepted.

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[Statutory Authority: RCW 19.27A.020, 19.27A.025, 19.27A.160 and chapter 19.27 RCW. WSR 19-24-040, § 51-11C-40241, filed 11/26/19, effective 7/1/20. Statutory Authority: RCW 19.27A.025, 19.27A.160, and 19.27.074. WSR 16-03-072, § 51-11C-40241, filed 1/19/16, effective 7/1/16. Statutory Authority: RCW 19.27A.020, 19.27A.025 and chapters 19.27 and 34.05 RCW. WSR 13-04-056, § 51-11C-40241, filed 2/1/13, effective 7/1/13.]