



# 2018 SELECT IRC<sup>®</sup> OPTIONS

FOR USE WITH THE 2015  
MICHIGAN RESIDENTIAL CODE

**2018 Select IRC® Options  
for Use with the  
2015 Michigan Residential Code**

**International Code Council**

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# Preface

The purpose of the *2018 Select IRC® Options for Use with the 2015 Michigan Residential Code* is to familiarize home builders, building officials, fire officials, plans examiners, inspectors, design professionals, contractors and others in the building construction industry with the important updated and allowed alternatives. Each part of this book includes only a select number of 2018 IRC Significant Changes that may be chosen by builders and designers to be submitted to the enforcing authority for approval as an alternative. If desired, the *Significant Changes to the International Residential Code®*, 2018 Edition, may be referenced for many more significant changes. For a complete list of all approved changes, the International Code Council® (ICC®) publication *Complete Revision History to the 2018 I-Codes®* may be used.

Throughout the book, each selected change is accompanied by a photograph or an illustration to assist and enhance the reader's understanding of the specific change that might be allowed as an alternative. A summary and a discussion of the significance of the change are also provided. Each code change is identified by type, be it an addition, modification, clarification or deletion.

The code change itself is presented in a legislative format similar to the style utilized for code-change proposals. Deleted code language is shown with a strike-through, and new code text is indicated by underlining.

As with any code-change text, this book is best used as a companion to the code. Because only a limited discussion of each change is provided, the code itself should always be referenced in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the code change and its application.

The commentary and opinions set forth in this text are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the ICC. In addition, they may not represent the views of any enforcing agency, as such agencies have the sole authority to render interpretations of the *International Residential Code®* (IRC®) or the *Michigan Residential Code®* (MRC®). In many cases, the explanatory material is derived from the reasoning expressed by code-change proponents. The significant change items included in this publication were selected by the Home Builders Association of Michigan and not by the authors Steve Van Note and Sandra Hyde.

Comments concerning this publication are encouraged and may be directed to ICC at [significantchanges@iccsafe.org](mailto:significantchanges@iccsafe.org).

## How To Use This Guide

Public Act 504 of 2012 (commonly known as the Flex Code law) allows Michigan to choose to update the MRC either every three or every six years, as the state determines appropriate.

The state chose not to update to the 2018 edition of the IRC published by the ICC and will be staying with the 2015 MRC until the 2021 edition of IRC is available and adopted.

But you can now use the changes found in the 2018 IRC that you believe are favorable even without it being adopted in Michigan.

In addition to providing flexibility in when the residential code is updated, PA 504 also included language to allow the use, at the option of the contractor, of any section of the 2018 IRC.

### **MCL125.1504(8)**

Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act

*“If the Michigan residential code is updated on a 6-year cycle, then use of a material, product, method of manufacture, or method or manner of construction or installation provided for in an interim edition of the international residential code is authorized throughout this state and shall be permitted, but shall not be mandated, by an enforcing agency or its building official or inspectors. However, the enforcing agency or its building official or inspectors may require that if such a material, product, method of manufacture, or method or manner of construction or installation provided for in an interim edition of the international residential code is used, the use shall comply with all applicable requirements set forth in the interim edition of the international residential code.”*

This is not the proverbial “Get Out Of Jail Free” card as the use must comply with “all applicable requirements” of the 2018 edition of the IRC. The phrase “all applicable requirements” does not mean that the requirements of the 2018 IRC in its entirety now apply nor does it mean the requirements of an entire chapter of the 2018 IRC are applicable.

Take N1103.3.3 and N1103.3.7 as examples. In addition to following the requirements of these two sections, ducts buried within ceiling insulation must conform with the vapor retarder requirements of Section M1601.4.6 found in the 2018 IRC (which are identical to the vapor retarder requirements for ducts found in the 2015 MRC). You will still have to comply with all the other requirements found in Chapter 16 of the 2015 MRC. The advantage is that Chapter 11 of the 2015 MRC did not allow for ducts to be buried in ceiling insulation while Chapter 11 of the 2018 IRC does.

Despite the fact the Single State Construction Code Act requires enforcing agencies (building departments) and its building official or inspectors to permit the use of portions of the 2018 IRC, some officials or inspectors may still be hesitant to allow you to do so.

They do have a “Get Out Of Jail Free” card in R104.11, the alternative methods section of the 2015 MRC.

**R104.11 Alternative materials, design and methods  
of construction and equipment**  
2015 Michigan Residential Code.

*“The provisions of the code are not intended to prevent the installation of any material or to prohibit any design or method of construction not specifically prohibited in the code, if the alternative has been approved. An alternative material, design, or method of construction shall be approved where the building official finds the proposed design is satisfactory and complies with the intent of the provisions of the code, and that the material, method, or work offered is, for the purpose intended, is at least the equivalent of that prescribed in the code.”*

MCL125.1504(8) explicitly authorizes the use of a material, product, method of manufacture, or method or manner of construction or installation found in the 2018 IRC and fulfills the requirement in R104.11 that an alternative be approved.

The sections of the 2018 IRC reproduced in this guide were selected by the Building Code Committee of the Home Builders Association of Michigan® (HBAM®) as potentially being among the most useful changes from the 2015 IRC. Your ability to use sections of the 2018 IRC is not limited to those found in this guide but applies to any section in the 2018 code.

Our thanks to the International Code Council for partnering with us on this publication.

## **About the *Michigan Residential Code***

Builders, building officials, design professionals, contractors and others involved in the field of residential building construction recognize the need for a modern, up-to-date residential code addressing the design and installation of building systems through both prescriptive and performance requirements. The MRC is intended to meet these needs through model code-based regulations that safeguard the public health and safety in all communities, large and small. State of Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs adopts building codes for Michigan based on the International Codes® (I-Codes®) published by the ICC. The current MRC is based on the 2015 IRC and took effect February 8, 2016. The IRC is kept up-to-date through ICC’s open code-development process. The provisions of the 2015 edition of the IRC, along with those code changes approved through 2016, make up the 2018 edition.

The MRC is one in a family of Michigan codes published by ICC. The MRC establishes minimum regulations for residential building systems by means of prescriptive and performance-related provisions. It is founded on broad-based principles that make possible the use of new materials and new building designs.

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This publication would not have been possible without the detailed discussions and mutual arrangements made by Lee Schwartz, Executive Vice President for Government Relations, Home Builders Association of Michigan, and Mark Johnson, ICC Executive VP and Director of Business Development. Their hard work is greatly appreciated. Grateful appreciation is also due to many ICC staff members, including those in Product Development, Publishing, Marketing and Technical Services, for their generous assistance in the preparation of the original contents of the 2018 *Significant Changes to the International Residential Code*®. Fred Grable, P.E., ICC Senior Staff Engineer, shared his expertise and provided commentary on the plumbing provisions. Gregg Gress, ICC Senior Technical Staff, provided welcome assistance on the mechanical and fuel gas provisions. All contributed to the accuracy and quality of the finished product. Jen Fitzsimmons and Mary Lou Luif of ICC Publications and their staff were key to the accurate production and timely release of this great publication.

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## About the International Code Council

ICC is a member-focused association. It is dedicated to developing model codes and standards used in the design, build and compliance process to construct safe, sustainable, affordable and resilient structures. Most US communities and many global markets choose the I-Codes. ICC Evaluation Service® (ICC-ES®) is the industry leader in performing technical evaluations for code compliance, fostering safe and sustainable design and construction.

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## About Home Builders Association of Michigan

HBAM is a professional trade association, chartered in 1948 with the National Association of Home Builders. HBAM is comprised of 26 local home builder associations around the state and their builder/associate members. It works to positively promote the building industry and impact legislative, regulatory and legal issues affecting housing affordability.

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