

2021 Washington State Energy Code (WSEC) Residential Significant Changes: Lighting

BEGINNING JULY 1, 2023

In new construction, **interior lighting** in most spaces must now be controlled with either:

- a dimmer,
- an occupant sensor control, or
- other control that is installed or built into the fixture.

These controls are not required in bathrooms or hallways, or lighting that is specifically designed for safety or security.



Figure 1 Dimmer capability for lighting on the middle and right switch (left switch controls a local exhaust fan).



Also, the requirement for *high-efficiency* interior lighting now applies to all lighting in the home, including kitchen appliance lighting fixtures, up from 90% of lighting in the last code edition.

Where more than 30 watts of **exterior lighting** is installed, it must now:

- have a manual on/off switch which permits automatic shut-off actions,
- be automatically shut off when sufficient daylight is present, and
- if controls can override automatic shut-off actions, the override must be capable of automatically resetting to its normal operation within 24 hours



Figure 2 Image of a home with exterior lighting that would need to have automatic lighting controls.

For full code text, see 2021 WSEC Section R404

In existing buildings (alterations and additions), new lighting must be *high-efficiency*, unless the alteration affects less than 10% of existing luminaries. The lighting controls specified above for new construction are not required.

For full code text, see 2021 WSEC Section R503.1.4

This handout summarizes one significant change in the 2021 Washington State Energy Code (WSEC) for those buildings defined in the code as *Residential Buildings*. See complete code text for details.