



City of Houston
Building Inspection
CODE WORD 2012

INTERPRETATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF
THE HOUSTON ADOPTED CODES
2012 IBC, 2012 IRC, 2014 NEC, 2012 UMC, 2012 UPC,
2015 IECC and ASHRAE 90.1-2013

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PUBLICATION:	October 21, 2016				
SUBJECT:	Appendix RB Interpretations				
CODE(S):	Houston Adopted Residential Energy Code (2015)				
SECTION(S)	Appendix RB				

This code word is for the purpose of clarifying 3 sections of Appendix RB from the adopted 2015 IECC Residential Provisions.

RB103.4 Obstructions. *Solar-ready zones shall be free from obstructions, including but not limited to vents, chimneys, and roof-mounted equipment.*

This section specifically indicates that solar ready zones shall be free from obstructions. However, because the layout of future solar panels is not known or required to be shown, it is interpreted that this section is addressing more permanent obstructions that are not easily relocated such as chimneys, gas-fired equipment flues, and roof mounted equipment. Easily relocated items such plumbing and mechanical vent pipes may initially be located in the solar zone.

RB103.5 Roof load documentation. *The structural design loads for roof dead load and roof live load shall be clearly indicated on the construction documents.*

As indicated in the published commentary for this section, the loads for the roof, not the loads of any future solar installed equipment, shall be documented in the plans as a reference point for future designers and solar installation contractors.

RB103.7 Electrical service reserved space. *The main electrical service panel shall have a reserved space to allow installation of a dual pole circuit breaker for future solar electric installation and shall be labeled "For Future Solar Electric." The reserved space shall be positioned at the opposite (load) end from the input feeder location or main circuit location.*

This section specifically calls out a reserved space on the load side of the panel, for the purpose of backfeeding the bus bar within the cabinet. In this interpretation it is the intent of this section that all proposed installations be compliant with the provisions of the National Electrical Code (NEC). As called out in the NEC, line side connections are allowed, with the typical installation utilizing a wireway ahead of the panel. Due to this NEC approved installation method, as an alternate to providing a reserved space, and understanding that the wireway is typically installed at the same time as the solar energy system, a reserved space is not initially required.

Approved:


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