



# ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction Slab Edge Insulation Exemptions and Alternatives

Item 3.2 of the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes National Rater Field Checklist, Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2 and Item 3.4 of the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction National Rater Field Checklist, Version 1 / 1.1 / 1.2, define minimum slab edge insulation requirements. For slabs on grade in CZ 4 and higher, 100% of the slab edge must be insulated to  $\geq$  R-5 at the depth specified by the 2009 IECC and aligned with the thermal boundary of the walls.

Consistent with the 2009 IECC, slab edge insulation is only required for slab-on-grade floors with a floor surface less than 12 inches below grade in the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program and 24 inches below grade in the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction program. Slab insulation must extend to the top of the slab to provide a complete thermal break. If the top edge of the insulation is installed between the exterior wall and the edge of the interior slab, it is permitted to be cut at a 45-degree angle away from the exterior wall.

Where an insulated wall separates a garage, patio, porch, or other unconditioned space from the conditioned space of the house or building, slab insulation must also be installed at this interface to provide a thermal break between the conditioned and unconditioned slab.

Additionally, Item 3.5 of the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction National Rater Field Checklist defines minimum slab edge insulation requirements for above-grade concrete slabs. For above-grade concrete slab edges in CZ 4-8 (e.g., podiums and projected balconies), 100% of the slab edge must be insulated to  $\geq$  R-5 & aligned with the thermal boundary of the walls. At this boundary, for slabs resting on mass walls, insulation must extend  $\geq$  8ft. below the bottom of the slab edge & for slabs resting on columns, the insulation must surround the column, at a depth of 4ft.

Where specific details cannot meet these requirements, partners must provide the detail to EPA to request an exemption prior to certification.

To date, partners have requested and received exemptions for specific aspects of the following details, which are defined and illustrated in the figures below:

1. A continuous post-tensioned slab.
2. The horizontal brick ledge of a monolithic slab.
3. For MFNC only, the horizontal brick ledge of an elevated slab.
4. Where code requires an uninsulated termite view strip in lieu of a termite shield, which creates a gap in the slab edge insulation.
5. Slabs that separate occupiable spaces within the thermal enclosure from adjacent conditioned spaces.

To date, partners have requested but did not receive exemptions for the following details. Instead, alternative details were provided below to facilitate meeting the relevant requirements:

1. For MFNC only, in lieu of installing exterior insulation that extends for 8 ft. below the bottom of the slab edge, insulation may instead be installed on both interior and exterior surfaces of the wall for a minimum of 4 ft.
2. For MFNC only, in lieu of insulation at the slab edge that extends to the depth specified by Item 3.5 of the MFNC National Rater Field Checklist and is in alignment with the wall, above-grade monolithic slabs may instead install 4 ft. of horizontal, R-5 insulation above and below the slab.
3. For MFNC only, in lieu of extending the slab edge insulation to the depth specified by Item 3.5 of the MFNC National Rater Field Checklist, internally-supported above-grade slabs with R-5 insulation at the slab edge that connects to the under-slab insulation are allowed.

For the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program, these exemptions are noted in Policy Record IDs 00031, 00626, and 00949. For the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction program, exemptions 1, 2, and 4 were included from the inception of the program, the third is addressed in Policy Record ID 00195, and the fifth is addressed in Policy Record ID 00178. Alternative details are addressed in Policy Record IDs 00106 and 00284.

Please submit all requests for additional exemptions to [energystarhomes@energystar.gov](mailto:energystarhomes@energystar.gov). EPA will continue to compile exempted and alternative details in this document and work with industry to develop feasible details for use in future revisions to the program. Note that exemptions will impact the efficiency and comfort of the home; however, EPA is allowing them because it has not yet identified an alternative method to effectively integrate insulation into the design.

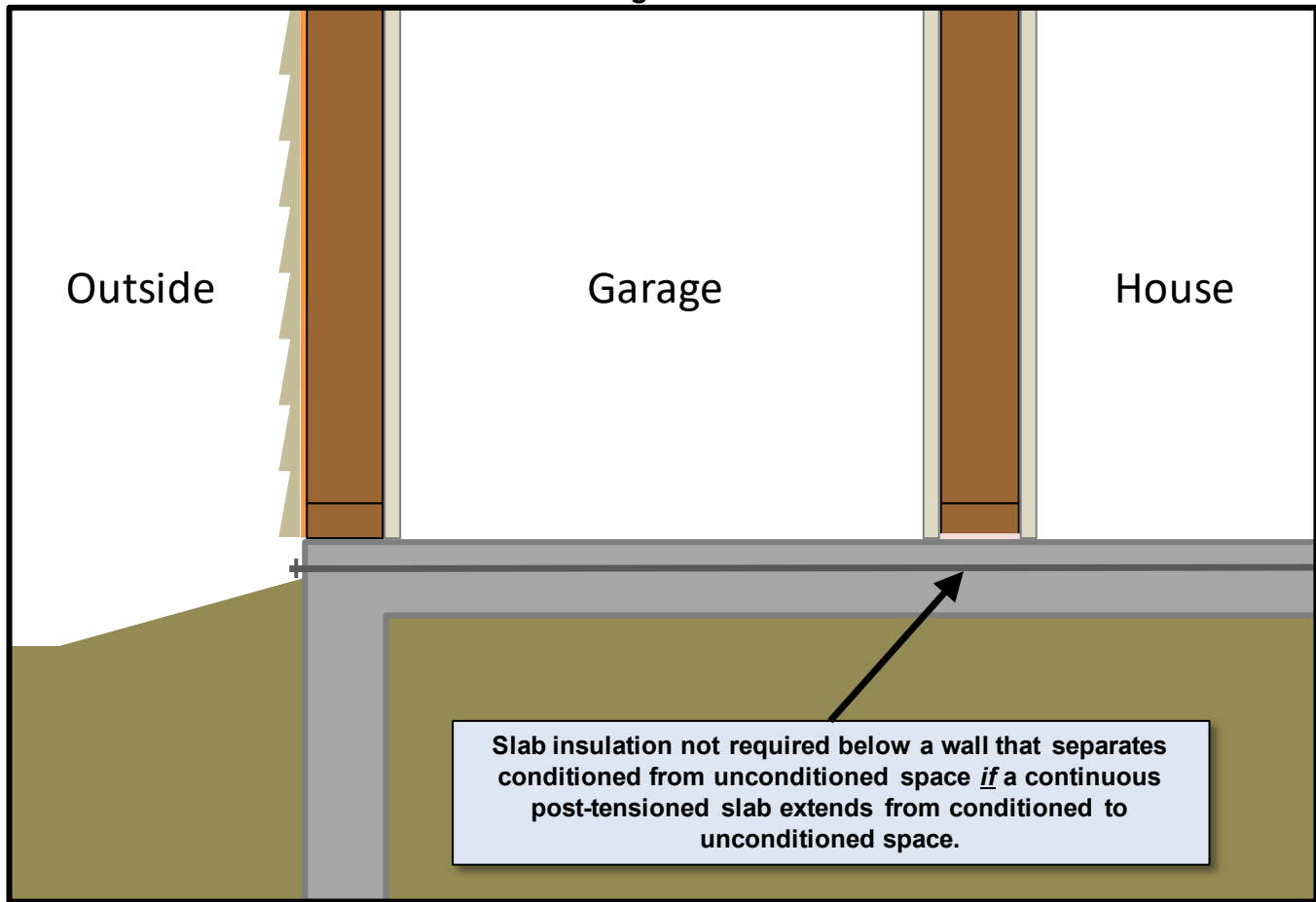


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## Exempted Slab Edge Detail 1: Post-Tensioned Slabs

The edge of a post-tensioned slab is not required to be insulated. Furthermore, for the scenario illustrated in Figure 1, where a continuous post-tensioned slab extends from conditioned to unconditioned space (e.g., from conditioned space to an adjacent unconditioned garage, to a hallway, to a porch), insulation is not required to be provided at this boundary. These exemptions are provided because of the challenge of accessing the tensioning cable anchors behind insulation and due to the movement of the slab during the tensioning process.

Figure 1



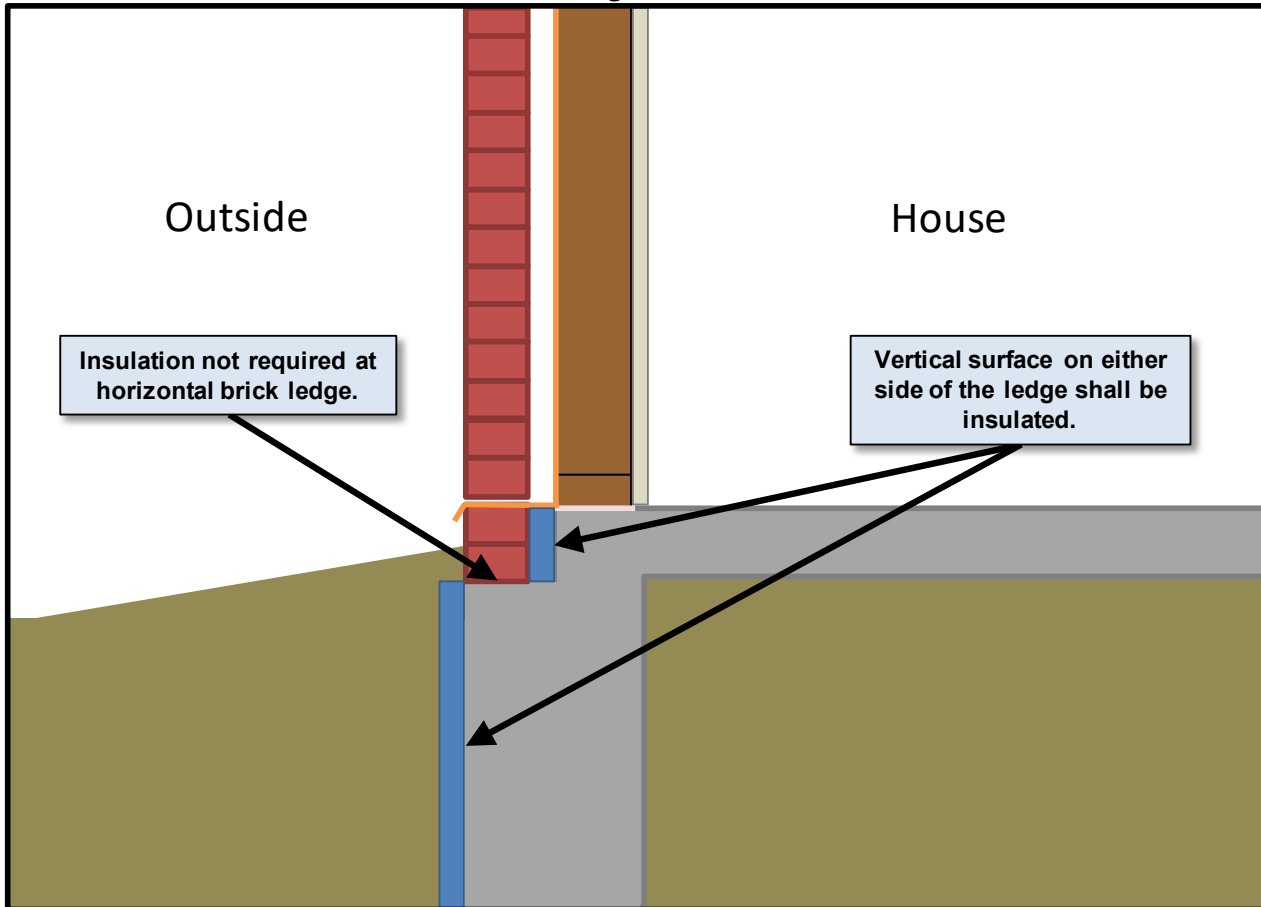


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## Exempted Slab Edge Detail 2: Monolithic Slabs with Brick Ledges

Insulation is not required at the horizontal brick ledge of a monolithic slab, as shown in Figure 2. However, the vertical surface on either side of the ledge shall be insulated. Furthermore, floating slabs with brick ledges are not exempted because the insulation layer can be moved to the interior vertical surface of the foundation. Slabs with multiple pours may be considered monolithic and use this detail if all concrete is in direct contact and reinforced (e.g., with rebar) at the joints.

Figure 2

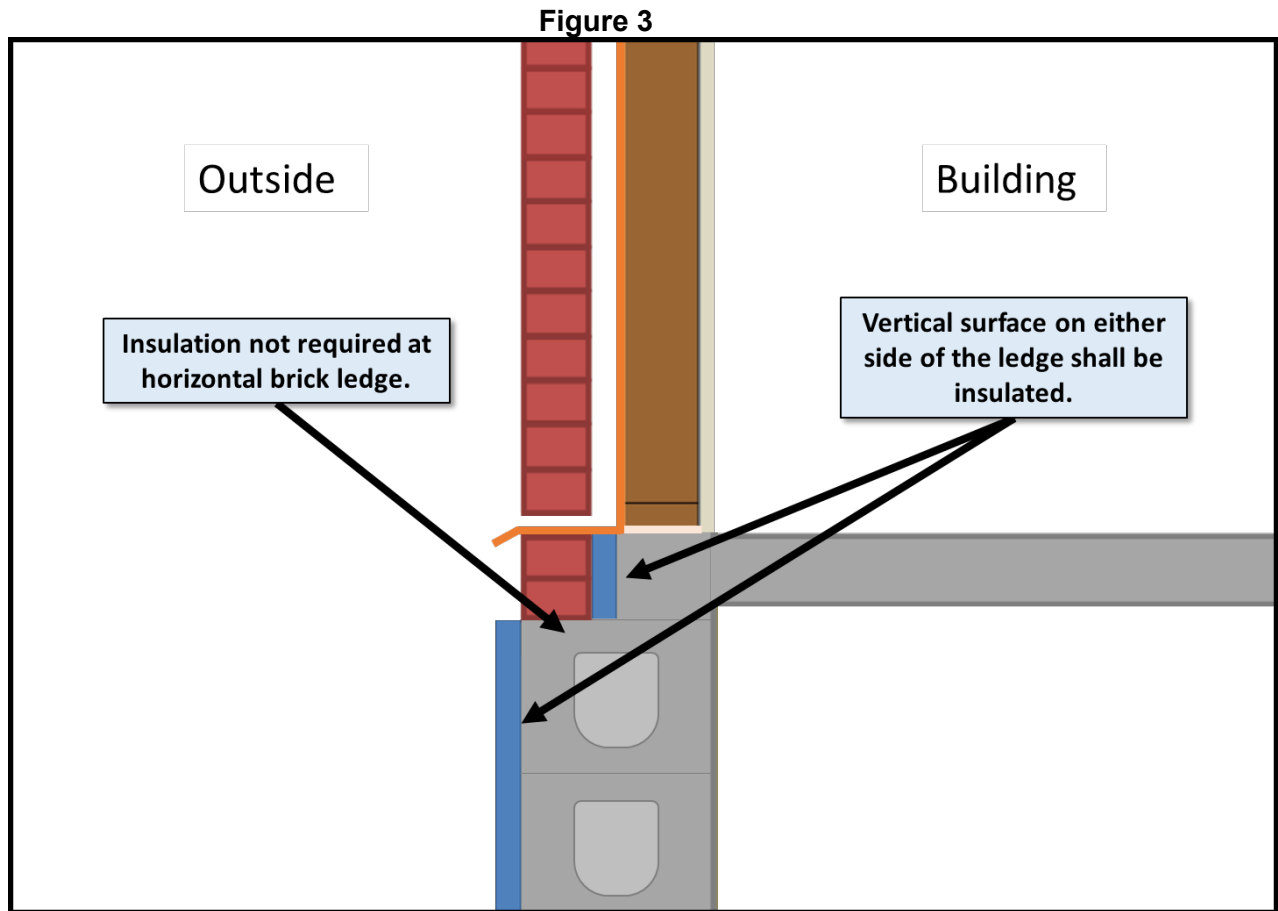




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## Exempted Slab Edge Detail 3: Elevated Slabs with Brick Ledges

For a project pursuing certification through the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction program, insulation is not required at the horizontal brick ledge of an above-grade elevated slab, as shown in Figure 3. However, the vertical surface on either side of the ledge shall be insulated.



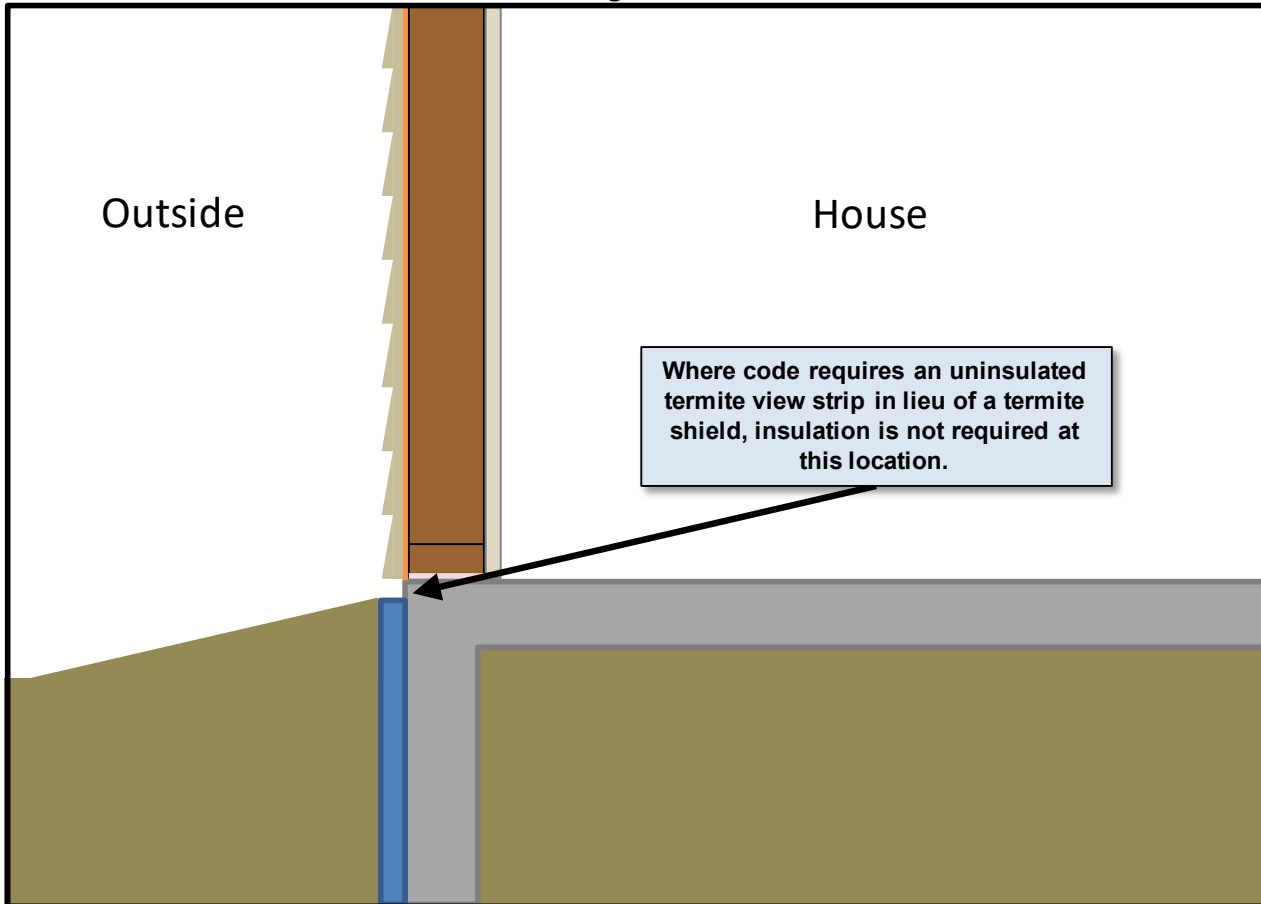


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## Exempted Slab Edge Detail 4: Termite View Strips

Where code requires an uninsulated termite view strip in lieu of a termite shield, insulation is not required at this location, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4





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## Exempted Slab Edge Detail 5: Slabs that Separate Occupiable Spaces Within the Thermal Enclosure from Adjacent Conditioned Spaces

Where a slab extends from conditioned space (e.g., a dwelling unit) to an adjacent occupiable space that is not conditioned space (e.g., an unconditioned corridor) as illustrated in Figures 5 & 6, insulation is not required to be provided at this boundary under the following conditions:

1. The adjacent occupiable space is entirely within the thermal enclosure of the building, and,
2. The assemblies separating the occupiable space from either the outdoors or not-occupiable space meet both of the following:
  - a. Except in California, the assemblies must meet the “Envelope, Windows, and Doors” requirements listed in the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Exhibit of the applicable national or regional program requirements (i.e., insulation levels; Grade I insulation; infiltration; windows; and doors). For the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction program, the requirements are modified by bullets 1 and 2 in the Common Space Applicability Notes and must be followed, as well.

In California, for the ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes program, which does not have an ENERGY STAR Reference Design, these attributes must be equal or better than the predominant performance values of the dwelling units. For the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction program, these attributes in the dwelling units must also be equal or better than the predominant performance values of the dwelling units. In the common spaces, the assemblies must meet or exceed the “Envelope & Windows” requirements listed in Exhibit 1 of the California Program Requirements.

- b. The assemblies must meet Sections 1-4 of the ENERGY STAR National Rater Field Checklist, focusing on high-performance fenestration & insulation, fully-aligned air barriers, reduced thermal bridging, and air sealing.

Per ASHRAE 62.2-2010, the term “occupiable space” is defined as any enclosed space inside the pressure boundary and intended for human activities, including, but not limited to, all habitable spaces, toilets, closets, halls, storage and utility areas, and laundry areas. Garages are generally not occupiable space, per this definition, and shall not be counted as such for the purpose of this exemption.

This exemption is provided because the occupiable space is within the building’s thermal enclosure. Therefore, a relatively small temperature gradient is expected between the occupiable and conditioned space, and a thermal break at this interface would provide limited benefit compared to the additional effort and cost.

Note that this policy does not apply to a slab that extends from conditioned space to an adjacent space that is not occupiable. For example, at the interface between a conditioned dwelling unit and a garage (which is not an occupiable space), both the assembly and the slab edge must be insulated.



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Figure 5

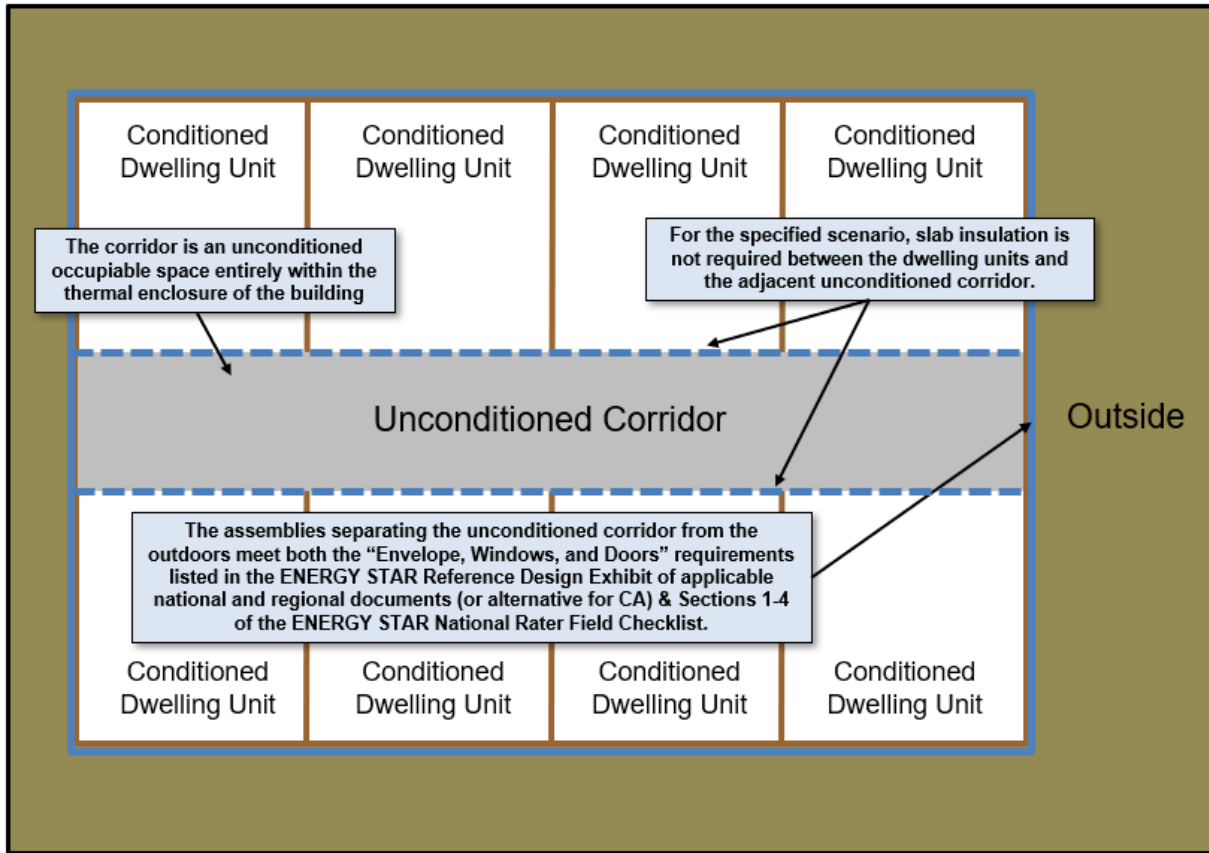
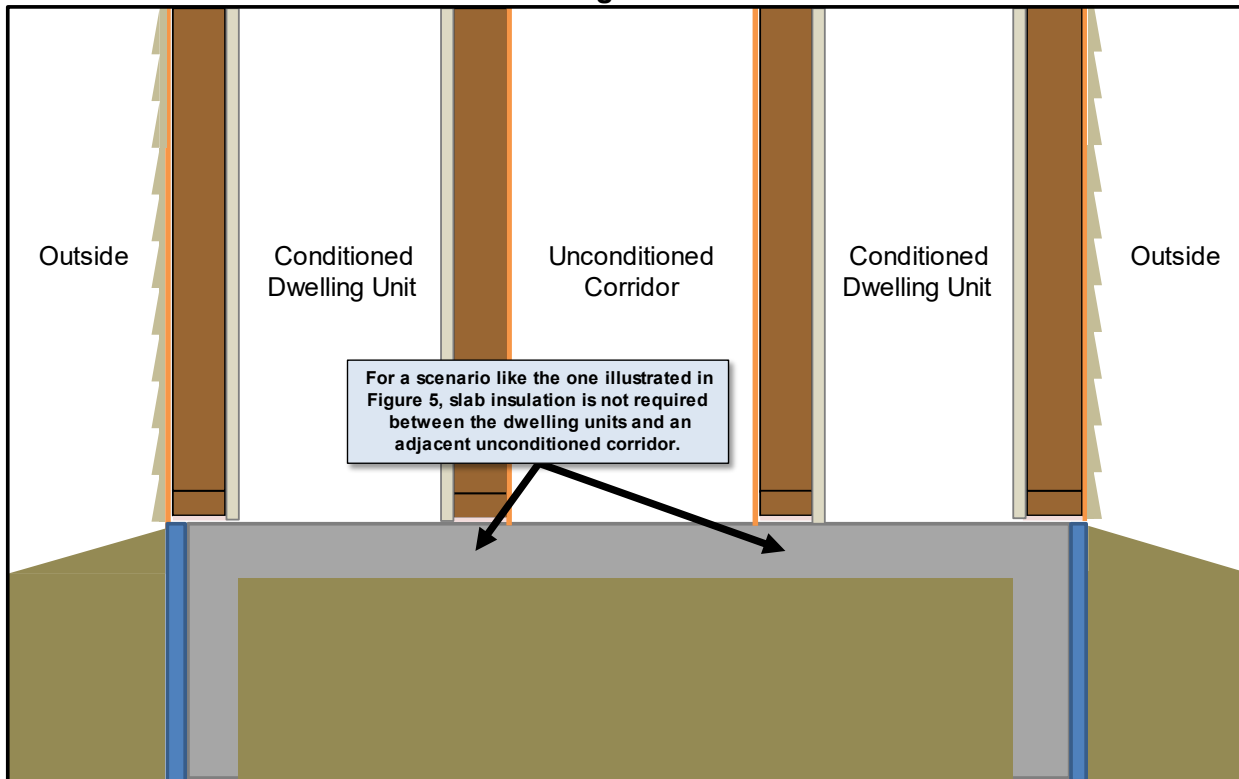


Figure 6



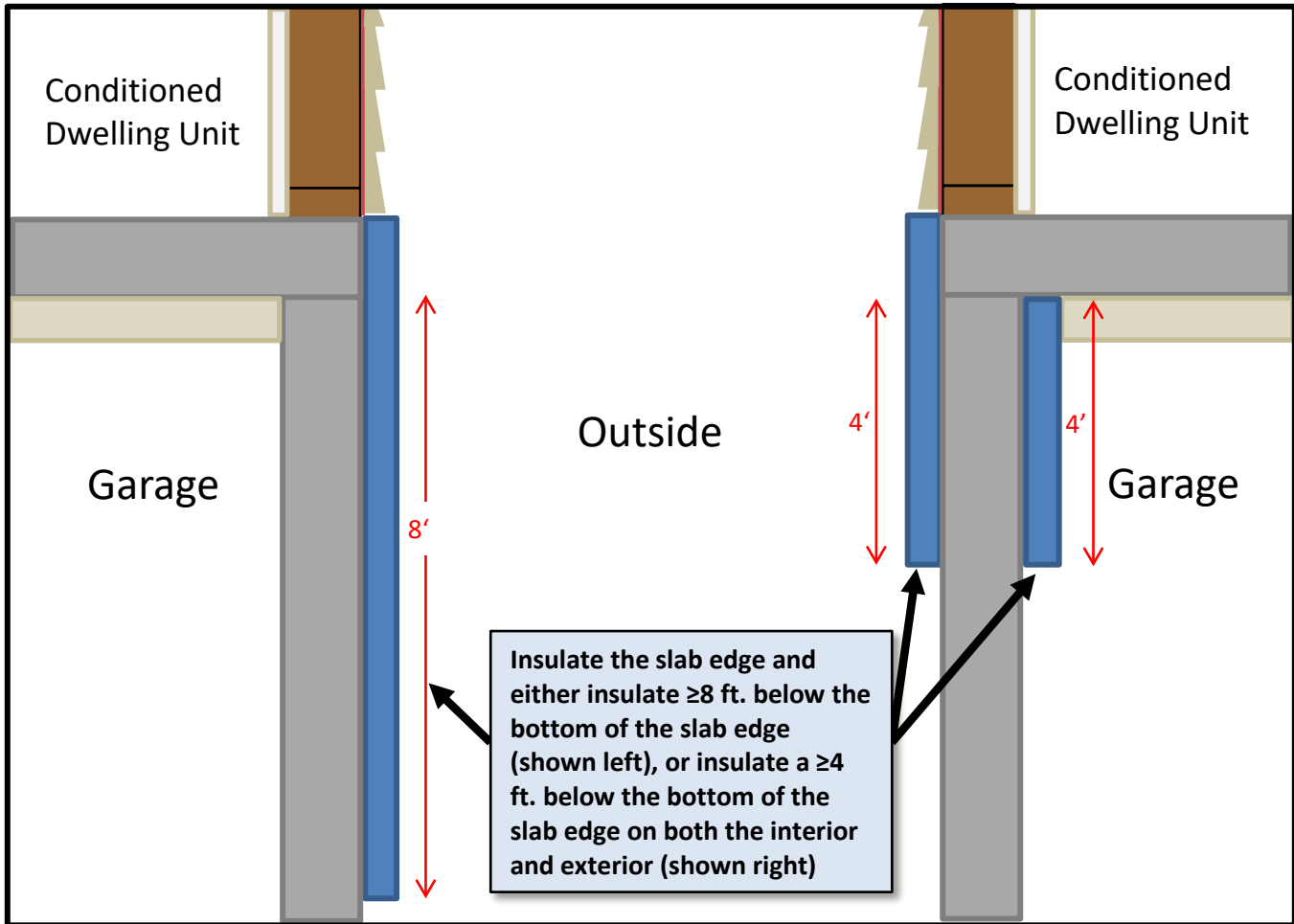


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## Alternative Slab Edge Detail 1 (MFNC Only):

Per Item 3.5 of the MFNC National Rater Field Checklist, above-grade concrete slab edges (e.g., podiums, balconies) in CZ 4-8 must have the slab edge insulated to  $\geq R-5$  & aligned with the thermal boundary of the walls. At this boundary, for slabs resting on mass walls, insulation must extend  $\geq 8$  feet below the bottom of the slab edge, as shown in Figure 8 on the left. As an alternative, insulation may be installed on both interior and exterior surfaces of the wall for a minimum of 4 feet, as shown in Figure 8 on the right.

Figure 8





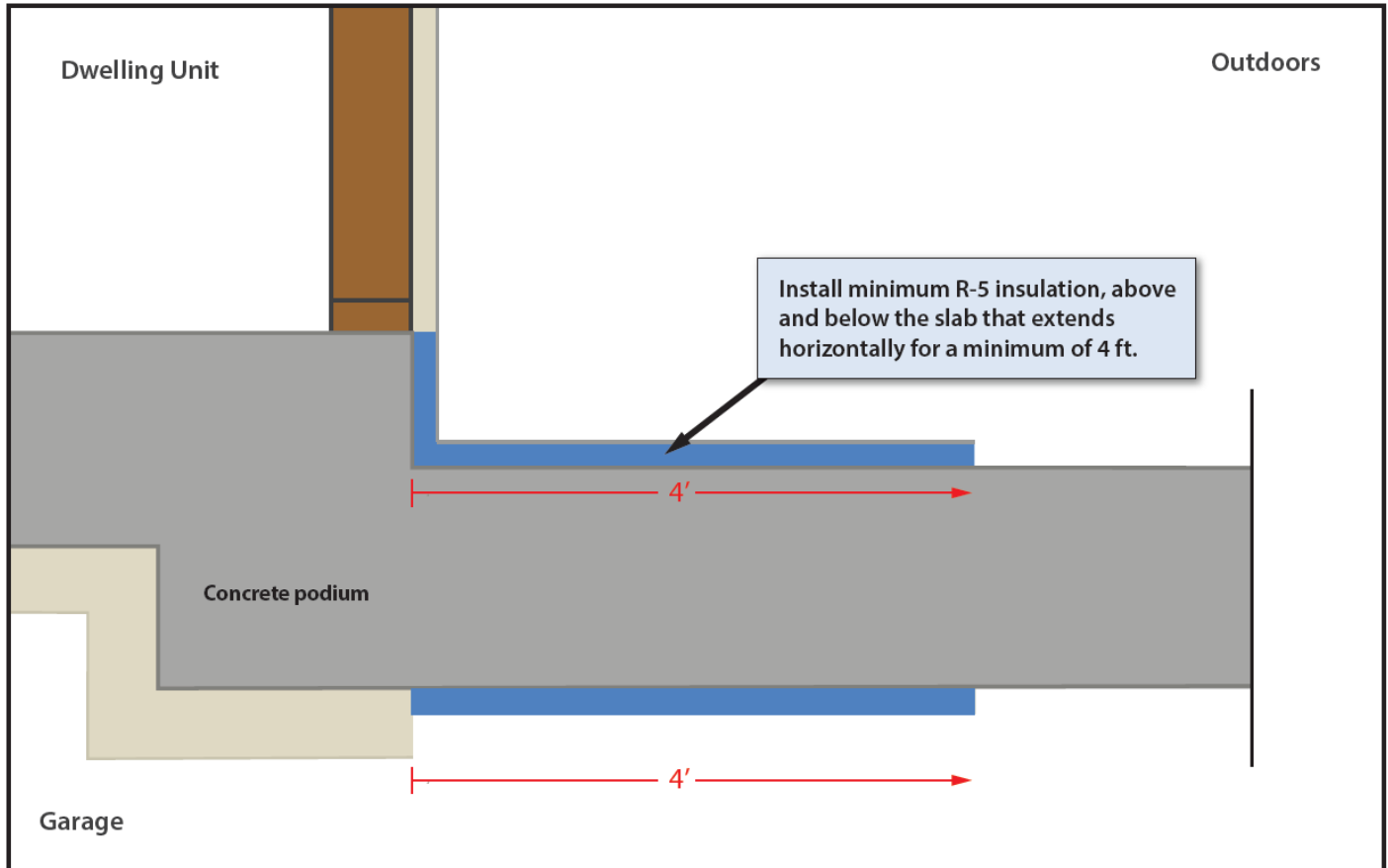


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## Alternative Slab Edge Detail 2 (MFNC Only):

In lieu of insulation at the slab edge in alignment with the wall as required by Item 3.5 of the MFNC National Rater Field Checklist, above-grade monolithic slabs may install 4 feet of horizontal, R-5 insulation above and below the slab as shown in Figure 8. Insulation installed on top of slab shall be covered by a durable floor surface.

Figure 9





# ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction Slab Edge Insulation Exemptions and Alternatives

## Alternative Slab Edge Detail 3 (MFNC Only):

In lieu of slab edge insulation extended to the depth specified by Item 3.5 of the MFNC National Rater Field Checklist, internally-supported above-grade slabs with R-5 slab edge insulation that is in full contact with the under-slab insulation are allowed, as shown in Figure 10.

Most elevated slabs rest on concrete walls and, therefore, typically cannot maintain such a thermal break. However, for those elevated slabs designed to be internally supported in such a way that continuous R-5 insulation can be maintained across the slab edge and connect to the under-slab insulation, their slab edge insulation is not required to extend below the slab edge, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 10

