

CITY OF CHICO ENERGY CONSERVATION RETROFIT REQUIREMENTS

Chico Municipal Code Chapter 16.60

In 1991, the City of Chico enacted a residential energy conservation ordinance (RECO) requiring property owners to provide certain energy and water conservation measures upon the resale of residential properties built prior to 1983. The intent is to lessen the impacts of rising energy and water costs on renters and homeowners. The specifics of the ordinance can be found in Chapter 16.60 of the Chico Municipal Code (CMC).

The CMC was amended in December 2010 to include updated energy efficiency requirements, and additional water conservation elements. The CMC states that every home or apartment building **built prior to 1991** must have the following energy/water efficiency measures, listed in order of priority, before being sold or transferred:

1. All accessible attic space with 30" or greater headroom must be insulated to a minimum thermal resistance rating of R-30.
2. All major cracks, joints, and other openings in building exteriors must be caulked, weather stripped, or otherwise sealed to limit air infiltration.
3. All sink and lavatory faucets must be fitted with low-flow faucets with a maximum flow rate of 2.75 gallons per minute or an aerator.
4. All shower fixtures must be fitted with in-line shower restrictors or low flow shower heads with a maximum water flow rate of 3-gallons per minute, except where:
 - a. The shower head has an existing flow rate of less than three gallons per minute as a result of reduced water pressure;
 - b. The shower head and shower arm are of a ball joint type which is connected within a wall.
5. Unless determined unfeasible, all toilets must be low-flow toilets rated at 1.6 gallons per flush or less.
6. Thermostats must be programmable, where feasible.
7. All exposed cold water lines connected to and within five-feet of existing water heaters, and all hot water lines from water heaters in unconditioned spaces are to be insulated at a minimum thermal resistance rating of R-3.
8. All domestic water heaters must be fitted with external insulation blankets with a minimum rating of R-6, except where:
 - a. The interior thermal resistance rating of the water heater is at least R-12; or
 - b. It is impractical to wrap the water heater with an external blanket.
 - c. The manufacturer's instructions for the water heater preclude the water heater from being fitted with an external blanket.

9. All ducts in accessible areas shall be visually inspected to determine if they are intact and functioning properly.

EXEMPTIONS:

1. The sale, exchange, or transfer of residential housing which was constructed on or after July 1, 1991;
2. Any residential building for which proof of compliance has been properly recorded within 10 years from the sale or transfer;
3. Sales or transfers pursuant to a court order, such as:
 - a. Transfers ordered by a probate court or in the course of administration of a trust or conservatorship;
 - b. Judicial foreclosures or other transfers by a trustee in bankruptcy;
4. Transfers as a result of default;
5. Transfers from one co-owner to one or more co-owners;
6. Transfers to a spouse or certain relatives;
7. Transfers between spouses as a result of divorce proceedings; and,
8. Short sales, defined as sales in which the purchase price paid by the buyer of the property is less than the amount of the debt secured by the property.

COST LIMITATIONS:

Because the cost savings can be immediate, it is advantageous for property owners to comply with the requirements now even if they do not intend to sell their property in the near future. Most of the work can be conducted by the homeowner at their leisure, saving even more.

The CMC does limit the maximum amount you may have to spend to comply with the ordinance.

1. For single-family dwellings, the maximum expenditure will be \$800, or the cost of the attic insulation if the actual costs exceed \$800.
2. For multi-family dwellings containing 2 or more units, the maximum expenditure is \$560/unit, or the cost of the insulation installation, if greater.

Property owners may receive credit toward the maximum expenditure for measures installed 42 months prior to the sale, and for other conservation measures not listed above.

HOW TO COMPLY:

1. Check To See if an Inspection is Required.

If the residential dwelling being sold or transferred was built prior to July 1, 1991 and has **not** received a RECO energy conservation inspection within the last 10 years, it must be inspected again. To find out if your property previously received a RECO compliance certificate, look on the City of Chico's website on the [Building Division Home Page](#), or contact the Building Division at (530) 879-6700.

2. Schedule an Inspection.

If a compliance certificate is not on file and an inspection is required, the property owner has the following options:

- a. Include the RECO inspection in the regular private homeowner's inspection if already being conducted at the request of the buyer or seller. The inspection must be completed by a City-certified inspector using a City-approved form. The fees for private inspections are not set by the City.

A list of certified inspectors is available at the City's Building Division at 411 Main Street, Chico CA 95928 and on the City's website.

- b. Obtain a RECO inspection only from a City-certified private inspector.
- c. Obtain an inspection from the City of Chico's Building Division for a fee of \$262/unit. To schedule an inspection, contact the City Building Division at 530-879-6700.

3. Submit the Inspection Form to the City, or Perform the Work Needed for Compliance.

- a. If **no** additional measures are needed for compliance with RECO, the owner or the owner's representative should then submit the inspection form to:

City of Chico Building Division
P.O. Box 3420
411 Main Street
Chico CA 95927
FAX: 530-895-4726

- b. If additional measures are needed, owners may choose to perform the work themselves and greatly reduce the costs of compliance, or they may hire someone to perform the work.
- c. If the property is not in compliance, the seller may transfer the responsibility to the buyer if mutually agreed by both parties. A city-approved form must be signed by both the seller and the buyer, and submitted to the Building Division. Buyers will have 180 days to complete the RECO measures.

INFORMATION/FORMS:

1. [Chico Municipal Code Section 16.60](#)
2. List of City Approved Inspectors
3. Seller/Buyer Transfer of Responsibility Form
4. Sample Certificate of Compliance

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE:

After receiving an inspection form, the City Building Official will review the form and determine whether the property is in compliance with RECO. Once approved, a Certificate of Compliance will be issued to the property owner or the owner's representative. The City will keep the certificate on file for 10 years.

VIOLATIONS:

A violation of the RECO provisions in CMC Chapter 16.60 is an infraction and may be punishable by a fine.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW/APPEAL:

Any owner, transferee, or occupant, aggrieved by a determination made or action taken by the Building Official pursuant to CMC Chapter 16.60 may apply for an administrative review of such determination or action by the Building and Development Services Director. Applications for administrative review shall be made in writing and submitted to the Director within 15 days from the determination or action.

Owners, transferees or occupants may also appeal the decision made by the Director to the Chico City Council as provided by CMC 16.60.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Free showerheads and aerators, rebates, and other helpful information can be found at:

[California Water Service Company](#), (530) 893-6300

[Pacific Gas & Electric](#), 1-800-743-5000

[Valley Contractors Exchange](#), (530) 343-1981

QUESTIONS?

For further information regarding the RECO requirements, call the Building Division at (530) 879-6700 between 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. You may also visit the office at Chico Municipal Center, 411 Main Street, Chico.