






Cathedral Ceiling Assemblies


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Pennsylvania Housing Research Center



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Program Description


Cathedral ceiling assemblies or ceilings without attics are not new concepts in residential designs. However, with the increased need for energy efficiency and tighter tolerance for moisture and air infiltration, the dedicated design for these assemblies cannot be overlooked. In this session, learn about prescriptive designs for ceilings without attic spaces and break down some of the critical details that may help achieve an energy-efficient assembly.



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Learning Objectives

- Understand what ceilings without attic spaces are per the definition in the 2018 IRC.
- Review 2018 IRC prescriptive designs for ceilings without attic spaces.
- Examine how the lack of attention to details can lead to increased risk in assemblies. Increased risk could include a reduced insulation rating or susceptibility to early decay of building materials.
- Review key details that can increase the longevity of ceilings without attic space assemblies, which can provide an energy-efficient assembly for the end user.



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Why Are You Here?



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Agenda

- What are the attic R-values in Pennsylvania?
- Take a look at how these R-values can change depending on the assembly
- Explain Cathedral Ceiling Assemblies and Ceilings without Attics?
- Walk through the prescriptive requirements
- Prescriptive designs
 - Vented
 - Unvented




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UCC Energy Code Summary




Chapter 11

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Residential Provisions

+



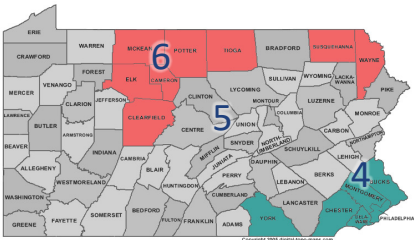
2021 Pennsylvania Alternative Residential Energy Provisions


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Climate Zones in PA






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2018 IRC Table N1102.1.2

Table N1102.1.2 (R402.1.2)
INSULATION AND FENESTRATION REQUIREMENTS BY COMPONENT

Climate Zone	Fenestration U-Factor	SKYLIGHT* U-FACTOR	GLAZED FENESTRATION IN SHGC**	CEILING R-VALUE	WOOD FRAME WALL R-VALUE	MASS WALL R-VALUE	FLOOR R-VALUE	BASEMENT* WALL R-VALUE	SLAB* R-VALUE & DEPTH	CRAWL SPACE WALL R-VALUE
1	NR	0.75	0.25	30	13	3/4	13	0	0	0
2	0.40	0.65	0.25	38	13	4/6	13	0	0	0
3	0.35	0.55	0.25	38	20 or 13 + 5"	8/13	19	5/12	0	15/13
4 except Marine	0.32	0.55	0.40	49	20 or 13 + 5"	8/13	19	10/13	10, 2 ft	10/13
5 and Marine 4	0.30	0.55	NR	49	20 or 13 + 5"	13/17	30"	15/19	10, 2 ft	15/19
6	0.30	0.55	NR	49	20 + 5" or 13 + 10"	15/20	30"	15/19	10, 4 ft	15/19
7 and 8	0.30	0.55	NR	49	20 + 5" or 13 + 10"	18/21	38"	15/19	10, 4 ft	15/19



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Prescriptive Ceiling R-Value Insulation

- N1102.1.2
 - CZ 4, 5 & 6: R-49
- N1102.2.1 Ceilings with attic spaces
 - CZ 4, 5 & 6: Potential reduction to R-38
- N1102.2.2 Ceilings without attic spaces
 - CZ 4, 5 & 6: Potential reduction to R-30

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N1102.2 Specific Insulation Requirements

- In addition to the requirements of Section N1102.1, insulation shall meet the specific requirements of Sections N1102.2.1 through N1102.2.13.
 - N1102.2.1
 - N1102.2.2
 - N1102.2.3

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N1102.2.1 Ceilings With Attic Spaces


- Where Section R1102.1.2 requires R-38 insulation in the ceiling, installing R-30 insulation over 100 percent of the ceiling area requiring insulation shall satisfy the requirement for R-38 insulation wherever the full height of uncompressed R-30 insulation extends over the wall top plate at the eaves. **Where Section N1102.1.2 requires R-49 insulation in the ceiling, installing R-38 insulation over 100 percent of the ceiling area requiring insulation shall satisfy the requirement for R-49 insulation wherever the full height of uncompressed R-38 insulation extends over the wall top plate at the eaves.**

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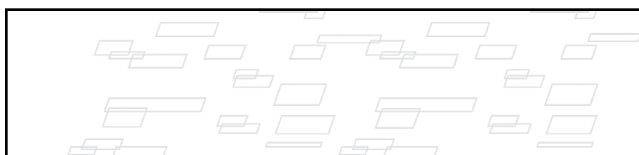
What is an Attic?

- **2018 IRC Definition:**
 - The unfinished space between the ceiling assembly and the roof assembly.
- **2018 IRC Commentary also adds:**
 - An attic is the unfinished space between the ceiling joists of the top story and the roof rafters.





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Vented Ceiling Assemblies




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Vented vs. Unvented

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vented<ul style="list-style-type: none">- R806.1 – Ventilation Required- R806.2 – Minimum Vent Area (See Brian’s Webinar - Attic Ventilation Understanding the Why)- R806.3 – Vent & Insulation Clearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unvented<ul style="list-style-type: none">- R806.5 – Unvented Attic & Unvented Enclosed Rafter Assemblies
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R806.1 Ventilation Required

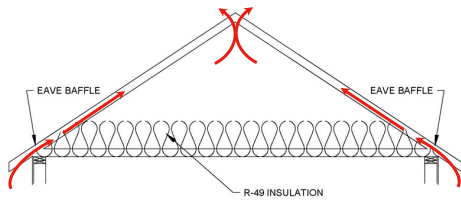
- Enclosed attics and enclosed rafter spaces formed where ceilings are applied directly to the underside of roof rafters shall have cross ventilation for each separate space by ventilating openings protected against the entrance of rain or snow.

Source: International Code Council (ICC), 2021, 2018 International Residential Code, County Ord. HR, II



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Ceilings With Attic Space



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R806.3 Vent and Insulation Clearance

- Where eave or cornice vents are installed, blocking, bridging and insulation shall not block the free flow of air. Not less than a 1-inch space shall be provided between the insulation and the roof sheathing and at the location of the vent.

Source: International Code Council (ICC), 2021, 2018 International Residential Code, County Ord. HR, II



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N1102.2.3 – Eave Baffle

- For air-permeable insulations in vented attics, a baffle shall be installed adjacent to soffit and eave vents. Baffles shall maintain an opening equal or greater than the size of the vent. The baffle shall extend over the top of the attic insulation. The baffle shall be permitted to be any solid material.



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Eave Baffle Specifications

Dimensions

Cut-Out Width (in.)	22.5 in
Product Depth (in.)	1.5
Product Width (in.)	22.5



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Source: <https://www.homedepot.com/p/American-Whisper-Product-Accessories-22.5-in-x-1.5-in-Black-Soffit-Insulation-Baffle-ACCUEVT1202942730>

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Eave Baffle Specifications

Dimensions

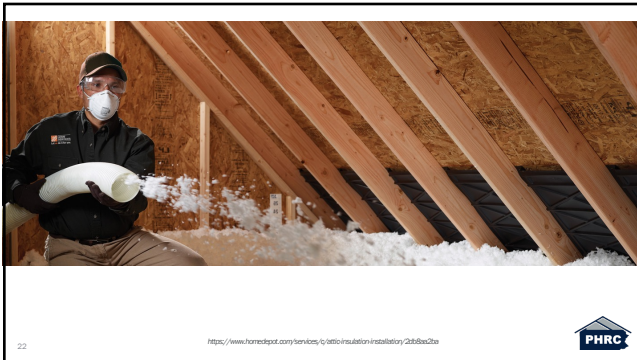
Product Depth (in.)	48 in	Product Height (in.)	2.5 in
Product Width (in.)	22.5 in		



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Source: <https://www.homedepot.com/p/Owens-Corning-Roll-R-Mate-20-1/2-in-x-48-in-Attic-Insulation-Rolls-48-in-x-22.5-in-x-2.5-in-Attic-Insulation-Roll-ACCUEVT1202942730>

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N1102.2.1 Ceilings With Attic Spaces

- Where Section R1102.1.2 requires R-38 insulation in the ceiling, installing R-30 insulation over 100 percent of the ceiling area requiring insulation shall satisfy the requirement for R-38 insulation wherever the full height of uncompressed R-30 insulation extends over the wall top plate at the eaves. **Where Section N1102.1.2 requires R-49 insulation in the ceiling, installing R-38 insulation over 100 percent of the ceiling area requiring insulation shall satisfy the requirement for R-49 insulation wherever the full height of uncompressed R-38 insulation extends over the wall top plate at the eaves.**

Source: International Code Council (ICC), 2021, 2018 International Residential Code, County Club 916, IL. PHRC

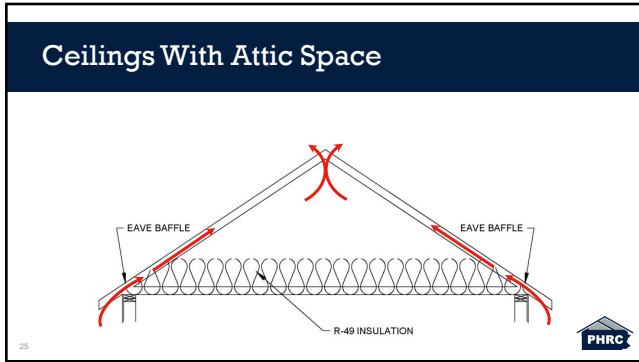
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Compressed Insulation Values - NAIMA

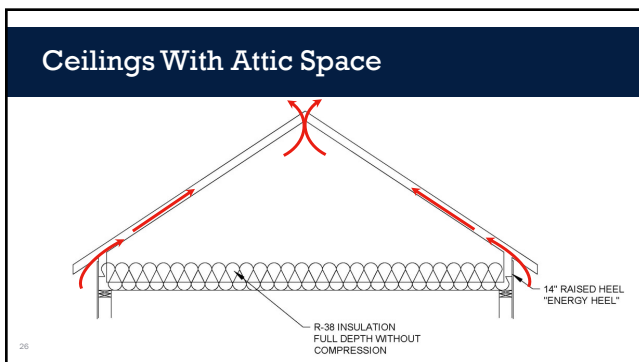
Nominal Lumber Size	Cavity Depth	Estimated R-values for Insulation Compressed into Framing Cavities																		
		R-49	R-38	R-30	R-25	R-21	R-20	R-19	R-15	R-13	R-11									
1 Joist	14"	49																		
1 Joist	11 7/8"	44	38																	
2x12	11 1/4"	42	37	30																
1 Joist	9 1/2"		33	29																
2x10	9 1/4"		32	29	30	25														
2x8	7 1/4"		25	25	24	21														
2x6 (metal)	6"					21				19										
2x6	5 1/2"						21	20	18											
2x4 (metal)	4"						16	16	14											
2x4 (metal)	3 5/8"						15	15	14											
2x4	3 1/2"						15	14		15	13	11								
2x3	2 1/2"									11	10	8.9								
2x2 (metal)	1 5/8"											6.5								
2x2	1 1/2"											6.1								
Label R-Value		R-49	R-38	R-30	R-25	R-21	R-20	R-19	R-15	R-13	R-11									
Label Thickness		14"	12"	10"	9 1/2"	8"	5 1/2"	6 1/4"		3 1/2"										

Source: https://insulationinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Compressed_R_values.pdf PHRC

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N1102.2.2 Ceilings Without Attic Spaces

- Where Section N1102.2.1 requires insulation R-values greater than R-30 in the ceiling and the design of the roof/ceiling assembly does not allow sufficient space for the required insulation, the minimum required insulation R-value for such roof/ceiling assemblies shall be R-30. Insulation shall extend over the top of the wall plate to the outer edge of such plate and shall not be compressed. This reduction of insulation from the requirements of Section N1102.1.2 shall be limited to 500 square feet or 20 percent of the total insulated ceiling area, whichever is less.

Source: International Code Council (ICC), 2021 International Residential Code, Courtesy G&B HR, III.



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Cathedral Ceiling Assembly - Rafter

- 2x12 = 11.25"
- Eave baffle = 2.5"
- Insulation clearance = 8.75"

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Compressed Insulation Values - NAIMA

Nominal Lumber Size	Cavity Depth	Estimated R-values for Insulation Compressed into Framing Cavities									
1 Joist	14"	49									
1 Joist	11 7/8"	44	38								
2x12	11 1/4"	42	37	30							
1 Joist	9 1/2"	33	29	25							
2x10	9 1/4"	32	29	30	25						
2x8	7 1/4"		25	25	24						
2x6 (metal)	6"				21			19			
2x6	5 1/2"					21	20	16			
2x4 (metal)	4"					16	16	14			
2x4 (metal)	3 5/8"					15	15	15			
2x4	3 1/2"					15	14		15	13	11
2x3	2 1/2"								11	10	8.9
2x2 (metal)	1 5/8"										6.5
2x2	1 1/2"										6.1
Label R-Value		R-49	R-38	R-30	R-25	R-21	R-20	R-19	R-15	R-13	R-11
Label Thickness		14"	12"	10"	9 1/2"	8"	9 1/2"	8 3/4"		3 1/2"	

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Cathedral Ceiling Assembly - Rafter

- 2x12 = 11.25"
- Eave baffle = 1.5"
- Insulation clearance = 9.75"
- 9.5" R-30 Insulation
- Eave baffle specification matters!

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Cathedral Ceiling Assembly – Rafter & 2x4 Below Rafter

- 2x12 = 11.25"
- 2x4 = 3.5"
- Eave baffle = 2.5"
- Insulation clearance = 12.25"
- R-38 insulation = 12"

The diagram shows a cross-section of a roof rafter with a 2x4 baffle attached to its bottom. R-38 insulation is installed in the space between the rafters. Labels include: R-38 INSULATION, EAVE BAFFLE, GUSSET AS REQUIRED TO HOLD 2x4, and 2x4 ADDED TO THE BOTTOM OF 2x12 RAFTER. The PHRC logo is in the bottom right corner.

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Cathedral Ceiling Assembly – Rafter & 2x4 Above Rafter

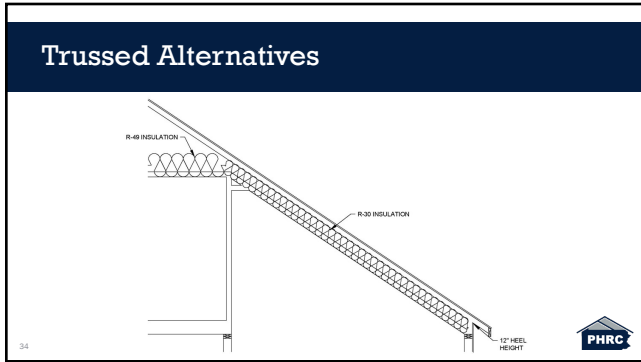
- 2x12 = 11.25"
- Insulation clearance = 11.25"
- R-38 insulation = 12"
- R-38 compressed to 11.25" = R-37

The diagram shows a cross-section of a roof rafter with a 2x4 baffle attached to its top. R-38 insulation is installed in the space between the rafters, with a high perm barrier between the rafter and the 2x4. Labels include: R-38 INSULATION (R-37 WITH COMPRESSION), 2x4 ON TOP OF RAFTER, HIGH PERM BARRIER BETWEEN RAFTER AND 2x4, and 2x12 RAFTER. The PHRC logo is in the bottom right corner.

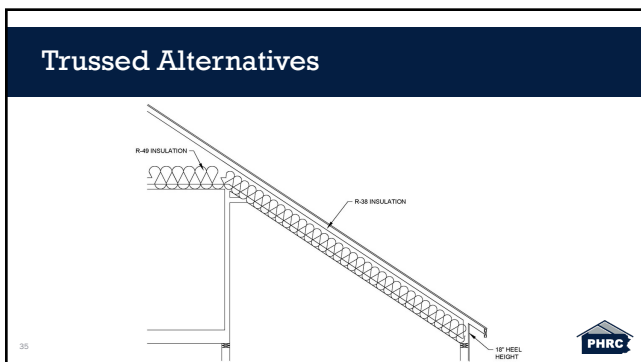
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A photograph showing the interior of a roof under construction. It features wooden rafters, a white vapor barrier, and insulation. The PHRC logo is in the bottom right corner.

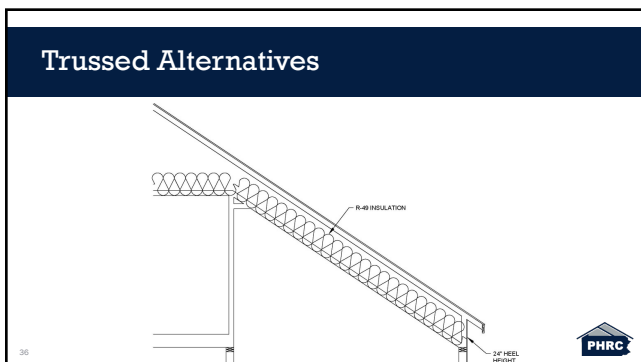
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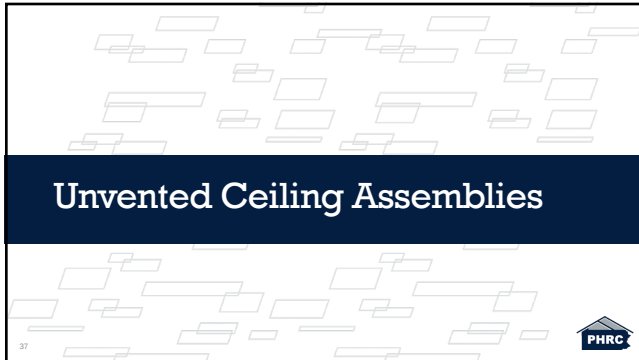
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Unvented Ceiling Assemblies

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Vented vs. Unvented

- Vented
 - R806.1 - Ventilation Required
 - R806.2 - Minimum Vent Area (See Brian's Webinar - Attic Ventilation Understanding the Why)
 - R806.3 - Vent & Insulation Clearance
- Unvented
 - R806.5 - Unvented Attic & Unvented Enclosed Rafter Assemblies

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R806.5 Unvented Attic and Unvented Enclosed Rafter Assemblies

- Unvented attics and unvented enclosed roof framing assemblies **created by ceilings that are applied directly to the underside of the roof framing members and structural roof sheathing applied directly to the top of the roof framing members/rafters**, shall be permitted where all the following conditions are met:

Source: International Code Council (ICC), 2017, 2018 International Residential Code, Chapter G16-H1, III.

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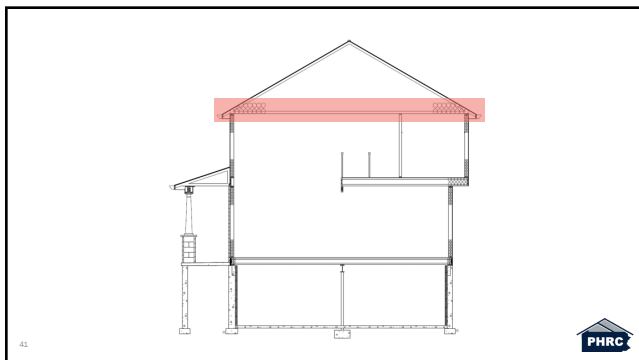
R806.5 Unvented Attic and Unvented Enclosed Rafter Assemblies – Cont.

1. The unvented attic space is completely within the building thermal envelope.
2. Interior Class I vapor retarders are not installed on the ceiling side (attic floor) of the unvented attic assembly or on the ceiling side of the unvented enclosed roof framing assembly.
3. Where wood shingles or shakes are used, a minimum 1/4-inch vented airspace separates the shingles or shakes and the roofing underlayment above the structural sheathing.
4. In Climate Zones 5, 6, 7 and 8, any air-impermeable insulation shall be a Class II vapor retarder, or shall have a Class II vapor retarder coating or covering in direct contact with the underside of the insulation.

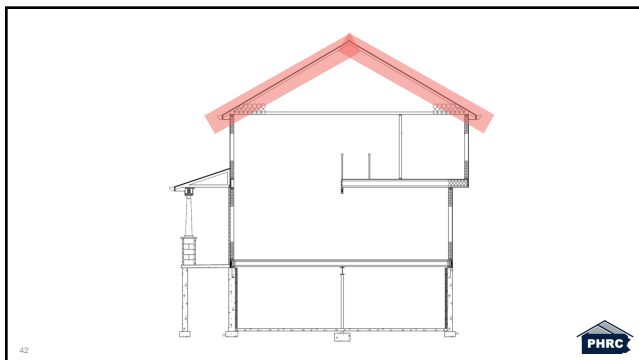
Source: International Code Council (ICC), 2021, 2021 International Residential Code, County C-6 HR, II



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R806.5 Unvented Attic and Unvented Enclosed Rafter Assemblies – Cont.

1. The unvented attic space is completely within the building thermal envelope.
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43 Source: International Code Council (ICC), (2021), 2021 International Residential Code, County C-16 HR, II. PHRC

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R806.5 Unvented Attic and Unvented Enclosed Rafter Assemblies – Cont.

5. Insulation shall comply with Item 5.3 and either Item 5.1 or 5.2:

- 5.1. Item 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3 or 5.1.4 shall be met, depending on the air permeability of the insulation directly under the structural roof sheathing.
 - 5.1.1. Where **fully air-impermeable** insulation is provided, it shall be applied in direct contact with the underside of the structural roof sheathing.
 - 5.1.2. Where **air-permeable insulation** is installed directly below the structural sheathing, rigid board or sheet insulation shall be installed directly above the structural roof sheathing in accordance with the R-values in Table R806.5 for condensation control.
 - 5.1.3. Where **fully air-impermeable and air-permeable** insulation are provided, the air-impermeable insulation shall be applied in direct contact with the underside of the structural roof sheathing in accordance with Item 5.1.1 and shall be in accordance with the R-values in Table R806.5 for condensation control. The air-permeable insulation shall be installed directly under the air-impermeable insulation.
 - 5.1.4. Alternatively, **sufficient rigid board or sheet insulation shall be installed directly above the structural roof sheathing** to maintain the monthly average temperature of the underside of the structural roof sheathing above 45 °F (7 °C). For calculation purposes, an interior air temperature of 68°F (20 °C) is assumed and the exterior air temperature is assumed to be the monthly average outside air temperature of the three coldest months.

44 Source: International Code Council (ICC), (2021), 2021 International Residential Code, County C-16 HR, II. PHRC

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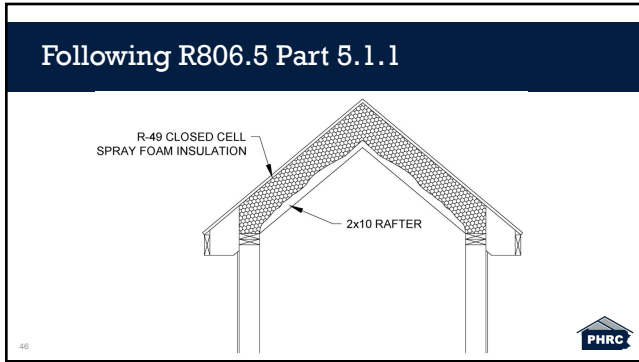
R806.5 Unvented Attic and Unvented Enclosed Rafter Assemblies – Cont.

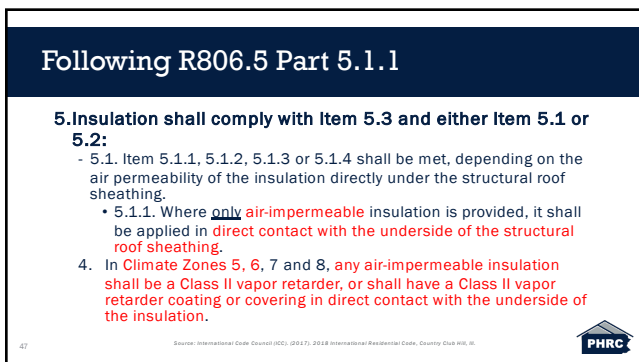
5. Insulation shall comply with Item 5.3 and either Item 5.1 or 5.2:

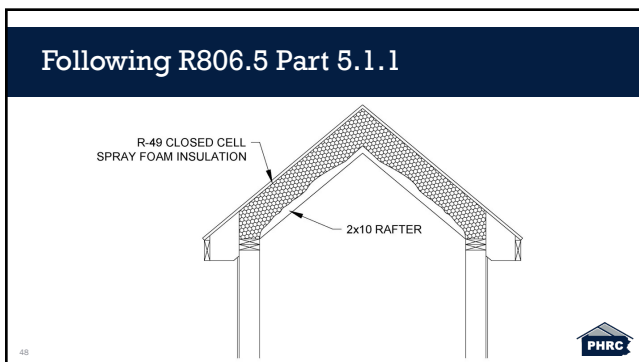
- 5.2. In Climate Zones 1, 2 and 3, air-permeable insulation installed in unvented attics shall meet the following requirements:
 - 5.2.1. An approved vapor diffusion port shall be installed not more than 12 inches (305 mm) from the highest point of the roof, measured vertically from the highest point of the roof to the lower edge of the port.
 - 5.2.2. The port area shall be greater than or equal to 1,800 of the ceiling area. Where there are multiple ports in the attic, the sum of the port areas shall be greater than or equal to the area requirements.
 - 5.2.3. The vapor-permeable membrane in the vapor diffusion port shall have a vapor permeance rating of greater than or equal to 20 perms when tested in accordance with Procedure A of ASTM E96.
 - 5.2.4. The vapor diffusion port shall serve as an air barrier between the attic and the exterior of the building.
 - 5.2.5. The vapor diffusion port shall protect the attic against the entrance of rain and snow.
 - 5.2.6. Framing members and blocking shall not block the free flow of water vapor to the port. Not less than a 2 inch (51 mm) space shall be provided between any blocking and the roof sheathing. Air-permeable insulation shall be permitted within that space.
 - 5.2.7. The roof slope shall be greater than or equal to 3:12 (vertical/horizontal).
 - 5.2.8. Where only air-permeable insulation is used, it shall be installed directly below the structural roof sheathing.
 - 5.2.9. An impermeable insulation, if any, shall be directly above or below the structural roof sheathing and is not required to meet the R-value in Table R806.5. Where directly below the structural roof sheathing, there shall be no space between the air-impermeable insulation and air-permeable insulation.
 - 5.2.10. The air shall be supplied at a flow rate greater than or equal to 50 CFM (23.6 L/s) per 1,000 square feet (93 m²) of ceiling. The air shall be supplied from ductwork providing supply air to the occupiable space when the conditioning system is operating. Alternatively, the air shall be supplied by a supply fan when the conditioning system is operating.

45 Source: International Code Council (ICC), (2021), 2021 International Residential Code, County C-16 HR, II. PHRC

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Why Closed Cell Foam?

- **Unvented conditioned attics can be constructed by installing low density open cell or high density closed cell spray foam directly to the underside of the roof deck (Figure 5). Both foam types work in most climates. In IECC Climate Zones 5 and higher only high density closed cell spray foam should be used.**

<https://buildingscience.com/documents/guides-and-manuals/gm-252-residential-spray-foam-guide-for-unvented-conditioned-attics%20and%20open%20cell-spray%20foam%20in%20un%20vented-attics>

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Photograph 8: Open Cell Spray Polyurethane Foam (ocSPF) - When you spray ocSPF into wall cavities from the interior the ocSPF can act as the air control layer and thermal control layer. It can't act as the vapor control layer - it is too vapor open. This is a problem when you spray ocSPF on the underside of roof/rattic assemblies you can end up with problems ("Ping Pong Water")

<https://buildingscience.com/documents/white-papers/white-paper-ocspf-on-attics>

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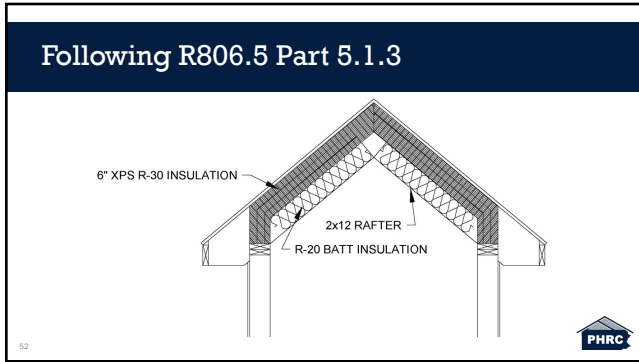
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Figure 1: "Ping Pong Water" - Water vapor from the interior passes up through the ocSPF and is stored in the wood based roof sheathing - and then driven out by solar radiation. In and then out...in and then out...a "ping" followed by a "pong" leading to an increase in moisture accumulating at the ridge requiring a means of moisture removal...either air supply and return from the house or a dehumidifier.

<https://buildingscience.com/documents/building-science-insights/bst-126-dry-harry-does-insulation>

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Following R806.5 Part 5.1.3

5. Insulation shall comply with Item 5.3 and either Item 5.1 or 5.2:

- 5.1. Item 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3 or 5.1.4 shall be met, depending on the air permeability of the insulation directly under the structural roof sheathing.
 - 5.1.3. Where **both air-impermeable and air-permeable insulation are provided, the air-impermeable insulation shall be applied in direct contact with the underside of the structural roof sheathing in accordance with Item 5.1.1 and shall be in accordance with the R-values in Table R806.5 for condensation control. The air-permeable insulation shall be installed directly under the air-impermeable insulation.**
- 5.3. Where preformed insulation board is used as the air-impermeable insulation layer, it shall be sealed at the perimeter of each individual sheet interior surface to form a continuous layer.

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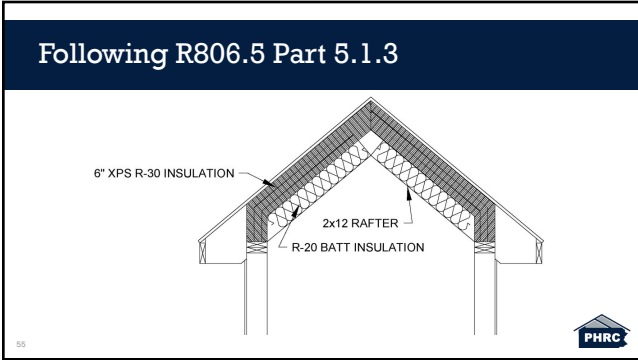
Table R806.5 Insulation for Condensation Control

TABLE R806.5 INSULATION FOR CONDENSATION CONTROL	
CLIMATE ZONE	MINIMUM RIGID BOARD OR AIR-IMPERMEABLE INSULATION R-VALUE ^{A,B}
2B and 3B (flat roof only)	R-8
1, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 3C	0 (none required)
4C	R-10
4A, 4B	R-15
5	R-20
6	R-25
7	R-30
8	R-35

^A Combustible but does not suppress the requirements in Section 703.2.2.2.
^B Alternatively, sufficient continuous insulation shall be installed directly above the structural roof sheathing to maintain the monthly average temperature of the underside of the structural roof sheathing above 40°F (4°C). For calculator purposes, an interior air temperature of 68°F (20°C) assumed and the winter air temperature is assumed to be the monthly average outside air temperature of the three coldest months.

Source: International Code Council (ICC), (2017), 2018 International Residential Code, Chapter 6B, III.

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Ceilings Without Attic Spaces – Limited Area

- Where Section N1102.2.1 requires insulation R-values greater than R-30 in the ceiling and the design of the roof/ceiling assembly does not allow sufficient space for the required insulation, the minimum required insulation R-value for such roof/ceiling assemblies shall be R-30. Insulation shall extend over the top of the wall plate to the outer edge of such plate and shall not be compressed. **This reduction of insulation from the requirements of Section N1102.1.2 shall be limited to 500 square feet or 20 percent of the total insulated ceiling area, whichever is less.**

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*2021 Pennsylvania Alternative Residential Energy Provisions

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PA104 Entrance requirements. This compliance path allows for some reductions in energy efficiency that will allow simplified enforcement and construction. To utilize the PA Alternative Energy Provisions, the building owner or agent must choose at least one of the energy enhancement options in Table PA104.

Table PA104
Energy Enhancement Options

Option	Description	Minimum efficiency by climate zone		
		South (S)	Central (C)	North (N)
1	Sealless heat pumps?	R-5 RFP and 15 SEER	15 RFP and 15 SEER	15 RFP and 15 SEER
2	All air ducts located inside the thermal envelope?	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
3	Geothermal or water source heat pump installed?	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
4	Improved efficiency on water heat pump installed?	15 RFP and 15 SEER	15 RFP and 15 SEER	15 RFP and 15 SEER
5	Improved efficiency condensing furnace installed?	82 AFUE	93 AFUE	95 AFUE
6	Electric entrance installation	900 VA	800 VA	800 VA
7	Improved efficiency windows	U-factor < 0.21	U-factor < 0.19	U-factor < 0.15
8	Package Improved efficiency windows and tighter shell (include air space heat flow)	Windows: U-factor < 0.25 Doors: U-factor < 0.30 Awnings: U-factor < 0.25	U-factor < 0.21 U-factor < 0.21 U-factor < 0.21	U-factor < 0.15 U-factor < 0.15 U-factor < 0.15
9	Package Improved efficiency windows and heat pump water heater	Windows: U-factor < 0.25 Heat Pump Water Heater: Compliant	U-factor < 0.21 Compliant	U-factor < 0.15 Compliant

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Cathedral ceilings: R-30 insulation, for up to 75% of the total living space square footage area

PA302.2 Ceilings without attic spaces. Where the design of the roof/ceiling assembly does not allow sufficient space for the required insulation, such as cathedral ceilings, the minimum required insulation for such roof/ceiling assemblies shall be R-30. Insulation shall extend over the top of the wall plate to the outer edge of such plate and shall not be compressed. This reduction of insulation from the requirements of Section PA301 shall be limited to 75% of the total living space square footage area.


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- <https://bit.ly/2021PA-Alt>



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Summary

- Top chord depth needs to accommodate the full depth of R-30 insulation and eave baffle without compression.
- Specify the specific eave baffle that works for your situation



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Questions?


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Resources






- Building a Vaulted, High-Performance, and Foam-Free Roof Assembly - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fA3hZOb0F7s>
- GM-2102: Residential Spray Foam Guide (Building Science Corporation - <https://buildingscience.com/documents/guides-and-manuals/gm-2102-residential-spray-foam-guide#:~:text=Unvented%20conditioned%20attics%20can%20be%20spray%20foam%20should%20be%20used>)
- BSI-126: Dirty Harry Does Insulation - <https://buildingscience.com/documents/building-science-insights/bsi-126-dirty-harry-does-insulation>

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Cathedral Ceiling Assemblies

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