



New Castle County Government Center  
87 Reads Way  
New Castle, DE 19720  
Department of Land Use - Building Inspections

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Date: **February 3, 2010**  
Subject: **Programmable thermostats**  
References: **2009 International Energy Conservation Code**

This Staff Code Interpretation is intended to be used to clarify Section 403.1.1 (Programmable thermostat) in the above referenced Code Edition.

Below is the exact text from the section of the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code in question.

***Section 403.1.1, Programmable thermostat. Where the primary heating system is a forced-air furnace, at least one thermostat per dwelling unit shall be capable of controlling the heating and cooling system on a daily schedule to maintain different temperature set points at different times of the day. This thermostat shall include the capability to set back or temporarily operate the system to maintain zone temperatures down to 55F degrees or up to 85F degrees. The thermostat shall initially be programmed with a heating temperature set point no higher than 70F degrees and a cooling temperature set point no lower than 78F degrees.***

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**Question:** If an addition is built on a house and the primary heating and cooling system is the one in the existing house, does the existing thermostat have to be replaced with a programmable thermostat? If a new addition is heated solely by a new forced air furnace, but the existing house is not heated by a forced air furnace system, is the addition's thermostat required to be programmable?

**Answer:** Nothing in Section 403.1.1 mentions additions to existing houses. Only the addition has to comply with the IECC requirements. The existing unaltered portion of the building or building system (that is existing HVAC system) need not comply. If the new addition has a new forced-air HVAC system, this system and its related controls (that is thermostats) must meet the new IECC requirements.

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**Code Updates:** The requirements of this section are unchanged by the adoption of the 2012 IECC.

George O. Haggerty  
Code Official

**STAFF CODE INTERPRETATION**