

# Above-Grade Wall Definition

IECC: 202

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## 2018 International Energy Conservation Code

**Revise as follows:**

**WALL, ABOVE-GRADE.** A wall associated with the *building thermal envelope* that is more than 15 percent above grade and is on the exterior of the building or any wall that is associated with the *building thermal envelope* that is not on the exterior of the building. This includes, but is not limited to, between-floor spandrels, peripheral edges of floors, roof and basement knee walls, dormer walls, gable end walls, walls enclosing a mansard roof and skylight shafts.

**Reason Statement:** The current definition of above-grade wall is general and vague and allows for an interpretation that ignores the thermal performance of important building elements. For example, the existing definition is not clear that exposed floor edges are part of the above-grade wall. Depending on how the code is interpreted/enforced, this could leave this building element unregulated.

This change to the definition clarifies it and closes this potential loophole. It is explicitly clear that the critical elements of a building that function as part of the wall component of the thermal envelope, even though they may not be thought of as walls, are regulated as walls. These elements will need to be either insulated to meet the above-grade wall requirements or be incorporated into weighted averages for the performance of the above-grade wall.

The language was drawn from the definition currently used in the WA state energy code.

**Cost Impact:** The code change proposal will not increase or decrease the cost of construction. This modification clarifies the code and should not increase the cost of construction.

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