Slab Edges

IECC: C402.2, **C402.2.8** (New)

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2018 International Energy Conservation Code

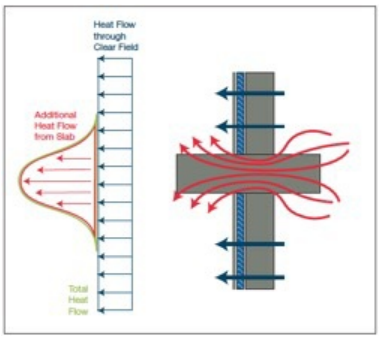
Revise as follows:

C402.2 Specific building thermal envelope insulation requirements (Prescriptive). Insulation in building thermal envelope opaque assemblies shall comply with Sections C402.2.1 through ~~C402.2.7~~ C402.2.8 and Table ~~C402.1.3.~~C402.1.3.

Add new text as follows:

C402.2.8 Concrete slab floors. Concrete floor slabs that penetrate the *building thermal envelope* shall be provided with either continuous insulation having a minimum thermal resistance of R-3 or a minimum R-3 thermal break located where the concrete slab penetrates the *building thermal envelope*.

Reason Statement: The requirements for overall assembly insulation have been well-addressed in the code. However, the existing requirements do not adequately address significant thermal bridging issues.
Thermal bridges are created when a relatively high thermally conductive material “bridges” through the insulating materials in the thermal envelope. Whether they penetrate all the way from the exterior to the interior of the building or only partially through the thermal envelope, thermal bridges make it easier for heat to travel in or out of the building. The impact of thermal bridges has a greater energy impact than a simple weighted U-factor calculation would suggest. Weighted U-factor calculations assume that heat travels in parallel paths through an assembly. In reality, heat also moves laterally, resulting in additional heat transmission through the assembly.



This has an impact on the heating and cooling loads of the building, as well as on the perceived comfort of space occupants. Humans perceive heat primarily through conduction, then radiation, then convection. So the presence of hot or cold surfaces due to thermal bridges can have a significant impact on thermal comfort. When the thermal envelope has hot or cold spots from thermal bridges, occupants are more likely to feel uncomfortable and respond by over-conditioning the air in the space, creating another source of energy loss.

The common practices of leaving concrete slab floor edges un-insulated and extending structural slabs through the thermal envelope to create balconies are particularly problematic and significant thermal bridges. This proposal addresses this significant issue by requiring that the thermal bridges created by concrete floor slabs that penetrate the building thermal envelope be addressed either by providing them with thermal breaks or by encapsulating them in continuous insulation. There are products available on the market that can be used to provide a thermal break within a continuously poured slab that extends to create a balcony. Alternately, balconies can utilize alternate structural configurations that do not require turning the building into a huge radiator.

Cost Impact: The code change proposal will increase the cost of construction
This will increase the cost of construction. Cost impact will vary depending on the approach taken.