



Land Development Services

Technical Bulletin

Subject: Wall Bracing for Sunrooms and Open or Screened-In Porches

Date: 2/24/2021

No.: 21-02

Summary: To ensure consistency, code compliance and safe construction, a code-based county policy is herein established for wall bracing requirements of sunrooms and open or screened-in porches.

Effective date: Immediately

Background: For purposes of the policy herein the following definitions shall govern the construction of sunrooms and open or screened-in porches:

- Open porches shall be considered one-story covered structures open to the exterior on at least two sides and by 50 percent or more of the gross area of its exterior walls.
- Screened-in porches shall be considered one-story covered structures open to the exterior on at least two sides and by 50 percent or more of the gross area of its exterior walls and enclosed with insect screening with a maximum thickness of 0.5 mm.
- Sunrooms shall be considered one-story covered structures with glazing area greater than 40 percent of the gross area of its exterior walls. The following shall also be considered sunrooms:
 - ✓ Four-season rooms
 - ✓ Three-season rooms
 - ✓ Porches enclosed with collapsible window products such as Eze Breeze or Sunburst
 - ✓ Porches with insect screening in excess of 0.5 mm in thickness.

Beginning in the [2015 Virginia Residential Code \(VRC\)](#), specific requirements for sunrooms were established creating two distinct methods of constructing a sunroom:

- 1) Using typical wood framing constructed in accordance with the VRC.
- 2) Installing a prefabricated, manufactured sunroom listed to be in conformance with referenced standard AAMA/NPEA/NSA 2100, entitled “Specifications for Sunrooms,” jointly published by the American Architectural Manufacturers Association (AAMA), National Patio Enclosure Association (NPEA) and National Sunroom Association (NSA).

Policy: To resist imposed lateral load from wind or seismic forces, use the following criteria to ensure compliance with the VRC:

- Manufactured sunrooms listed per the AAMA/NPEA/NSA 2100 standard include lateral load resistance in its design and therefore are not required to comply with the wall bracing provisions of the VRC.
- Sunrooms not listed per the AAMA/NPEA/NSA 2100 standard shall be designed to resist lateral load in accordance with the wall bracing provisions of the VRC or accepted engineering practice.
- Open porches and screened-in porches are not required to be braced for lateral load and therefore are not required to meet the wall bracing provisions of the VRC.

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