Consistent Definitions of Fenestration

The series of columns on the more significant proposed changes to the 2015 International Code Council Group B codes and their potential impact on the fenestration industry continues. This month’s column discusses the establishment of consistent definitions of fenestration in the International Residential Code and International Energy Conservation Code that were approved during the 2016 ICC Group B Committee Action Hearings. If the approval of these proposed changes is upheld through the Public Comment Hearings and Final Action Online Voting, they will be included in the 2018 editions of the IRC and the IECC.

Fenestration Definitions
AAMA submitted two proposals (G9 and G10) to provide definitions of “Fenestration,” “Vertical Fenestration” and “Skylights and Sloped Glazing” in the IBC and IRC that are consistent with those in the IECC. The proposals were broken into a total of six parts. Five of these were approved during the ICC Group B CAH. Based upon the CAH action, the definitions of these terms that would appear in the 2018 IRC are as follows.

Fenestration: Products classified as either vertical fenestration or skylights and sloped glazing, installed in such a manner as to preserve the weather resistant barrier of the wall or roof in which they are installed. Fenestration includes products with glass or other transparent or translucent materials.

Fenestration, Vertical: Windows that are fixed or movable, opaque doors, glazed doors, glazed block, and combination opaque and glazed doors installed in a wall at less than 15 degrees from vertical.

Skylights and Sloped Glazing: Glass or other transparent or translucent glazing material installed at a slope of 15 degrees (0.26 rad) or more from vertical. Unit skylights, tubular daylighting devices and glazing materials in solariums, sunrooms, roofs and sloped walls are included in this definition.

These definitions clarify that fenestration consists of both vertical glazing, as well as skylights and sloped glazing, and preserves the weather-resistant barrier of the building envelope component it is placed in. It also clarifies that tubular daylighting devices are to be treated as fenestration and, therefore, must be installed in such a manner as to preserve the weather resistance of the roof in which they are installed. Finally, they establish the angle at which fenestration goes from being vertical to sloped glazing as 15 degrees from vertical.

The definitions proposed for the IECC were similar, but with two distinct differences. First, they do not include the provisions that fenestration preserves the weather-resistant barrier of the building envelope. And second, they establish the angle at which fenestration goes from being sloped glazing to vertical as 60 degrees from horizontal (30 degrees from vertical).

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