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Electric Water Heater Elevation Requirements

Code: 2018 Residential Code

Date: August 28, 2026

Section: P2801.7, M1307.3, M1307.3.1

Question:

Are electric water heaters installed in a residential garage required to be elevated per the source of ignition requirements in P2801.7¹?

Answer:

No.

SL 2024-49 Section 2.5.(c) states that “Notwithstanding Section P2801.7, elevation of the ignition source is not required for electric water heaters.” See Excerpt 1 on page 2 for the full text of SL 2024-49 Section 2.5.

Follow up question #1:

Are there any other reasons an electric water heater installed in a residential garage would be required to be elevated above the garage floor?

Answer:

Section M1307.3.1² requires appliances located in private garages and carports to be installed with a minimum clearance of 6 feet above the floor if the appliances are located in the normal path of vehicular travel and are not otherwise protected.

Follow up question #2:

Does NCRC Section M1307.3 require elevation of an electric water heater such that the source of ignition is not less than 18” above the floor in a garage?

Answer:

Section M1307.3 references appliances generally. Section P2807.1 specifically addresses elevation of water heaters with an ignition source in garages. Section R102.1 states that where there is a conflict between a general requirement and a specific requirement, the specific requirement shall be applicable, so the ignition source elevation requirements in Section M1307.3 are superseded by the ignition source elevation requirements in Section P2807.1, which in turn are superseded by SL 2024-49.

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Excerpt 1: SL 2024-49 Section 2.5 ELECTRIC WATER HEATER ELEVATION REQUIREMENTS:

SL 2024-49 / SB 166

ELECTRIC WATER HEATER ELEVATION REQUIREMENTS

SECTION 2.5.(a) Definitions. – For purposes of this section, "Code" means the North Carolina State Building Code collection, and amendments to the Code, as adopted by the Council. As used in this section, "Council" means the Building Code Council. On or after January 1, 2025, "Council" means the Residential Code Council.

SECTION 2.5.(b) Water Heater Rule. – Until the effective date of the rules to amend the Code that the Council is required to adopt pursuant to this section, the Council and local governments enforcing the Code shall follow the provisions of subsection (c) of this section as it relates to the Section P2801.7 within the North Carolina Residential Code.

SECTION 2.5.(c) Implementation. – Notwithstanding Section P2801.7, elevation of the ignition source is not required for electric water heaters.

SECTION 2.5.(d) Additional Rulemaking Authority. – The Council shall adopt rules to amend Section P2801.7 of the North Carolina Residential Code to be consistent with subsection (c) of this section. Notwithstanding G.S. 150B-19(4), the rule adopted by the Council pursuant to this section shall be substantively identical to the provisions of subsection (c) of this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are not subject to Part 3 of Article 2A of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. Rules adopted pursuant to this section shall become effective as provided in G.S. 150B-21.3(b1), as though 10 or more written objections had been received as provided in G.S. 150B-21.3(b2).

SECTION 2.5.(e) Sunset. – This section expires when permanent rules adopted as required by subsection (d) of this section become effective.

End of Excerpt 1: SL 2024-49 Section 2.5 ELECTRIC WATER HEATER ELEVATION REQUIREMENTS

¹ **P2801.7 (502.5) Water heaters installed in garages.**

Water heaters having an ignition source shall be elevated such that the source of ignition is not less than 18 inches (457 mm) above the garage floor. Appliances shall be located or protected so that they are not subject to physical damage by a moving vehicle. The ignition source would apply to both electric and gas water heaters. The ignition source (not the bottom of the water heater) shall be elevated to minimum of 18 inches (457 mm) above the garage floor.

Exception: Elevation of the ignition source is not required for appliances that are listed as flammable vapor ignition-resistant.

² **M1307.3.1 Protection from impact.**

Appliances located in private garages and carports shall be installed with a minimum clearance of 6 feet (1829 mm) above the floor. Appliances located out of the normal path of travel are not required to be protected.

Exception: The requirements of this section shall not apply where the appliances are protected from motor vehicle impact and installed in accordance with [Section M1307.3](#).