



# Washington State Building Code Council

*Improving the built environment by promoting health, safety and welfare*

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## STATE BUILDING CODE OPINION NO. 20-10

**CODE:** 2018 Washington State Energy Code

**SECTION:** Table C403.3.5

**Background:** *Table C403.3.5 states that ambulatory care facilities are exempt from the DOAS requirements. This term is not applied consistently within the industry and thus there is confusion about the types of spaces that this exemption can be applied to. In Table C403.3.5, this term is not italicized as a defined term in the model codes, however there are applicable definitions in the 2018 IBC.*

*AMBULATORY CARE FACILITY. Buildings or portions thereof used to provide medical, surgical, psychiatric, nursing or similar care on a less than 24-hour basis to persons who are rendered incapable of self-preservation by the services provided or shall have accepted responsibility for care recipients already incapable.*

*INCAPABLE OF SELF-PRESERVATION. Persons who, because of age, physical limitations, mental limitations, chemical dependency or medical treatment, cannot respond as an individual to an emergency situation.*

*Also, Section C403.3.5 states that "For buildings with occupancies as shown in Table C403.3.5, outdoor air shall be provided to each occupied space by a dedicated outdoor air system (DOAS)...". Many medical office buildings have a diversity of tenants. Some perform services that fall within the IBC definition of ambulatory care and some do not. It is unclear if the ambulatory care facility test of each tenant then triggers the exemption in Table C403.3.5 for the whole building or just the tenant.*

**QUESTION 1:** For the 2018 WSEC, do the definitions in the 2018 IBC for *ambulatory care facilities* and *incapable of self-preservation* apply to Table C403.3.5?

**ANSWER 1:** **Yes. The changes to the 2018 Washington State Energy Code specifically increased the scope of the buildings under the DOAS requirements. Previously, medical offices were exempt from DOAS requirements. In the 2018 WSEC, the exemption is limited to ambulatory care facilities and research laboratories.**

**QUESTION 2:** Does the exemption for ambulatory care facilities apply to specific tenant space areas within a medical office building and other building types where medical services are performed?

**ANSWER 2:** **Yes. Section C403.3.5 applies to building occupancy areas except where specifically exempted by Table C403.3.5. However, any area that qualifies as an accessory occupancy to that ambulatory care facility according to the International Building Code would also be exempt.**

**QUESTION 3:** Does the presence of a tenant within a building that falls under the IBC definition of ambulatory care qualify the entire building for exemption to the DOAS requirements under Section C403.3.5?

**ANSWER 3:** **No. Areas classified as different use types would not fall under this exemption.**

**SUPERSEDES:** None; see also No. 17-09

**REQUESTED BY:** City of Bellingham