



City of Houston
Building Inspection
CODE WORD 2012

INTERPRETATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF
THE HOUSTON ADOPTED CODES
2012 IBC, 2012 IRC, 2020 NEC, 2012 UMC, 2012 UPC,
2015 IECC and ASHRAE 90.1-2013

CW No:	2012- B49	Page:	1	of	1
PUBLICATION:	July 6, 2021				
SUBJECT:	Definitions Related to Administrative Processes				
CODE(S):	2012 Houston Building and Residential Codes				
SECTION(S)	104.1 (Interpretation and Policy)				

Code Word B49 defines terms related to existing building alterations that is used for administrative processes associated with plan review and permitting. The intent is to clarify when a building alteration is minor and when it becomes a substantial alteration. Alterations to <50% of the building area is established as a minor alteration, and alterations to ≥50% of building area establishes a substantial alteration and establishes a plan review as a new building. This is intended to provide definitive numbers for customers and city employees. This will help all to know the expectations associated with the different scopes of work. The requirements established in this Code Word is intended for all structures. These definitions have no impact on how the Flood Department enforces its own 50% substantial alteration rule. In the event a conflict occurs, the most restrictive requirements apply.

- a. *Minor remodel or alteration.*
- b. *Substantial remodel or alteration*
- c. *New building.*
- d. *Building demolition*

Minor remodel or alteration means a remodel or alteration of an existing building where the total area of the building or structure altered is less than 50% of the total building area of the existing building as defined by the Houston *Building Code*, prior to any city approved modifications.

Substantial remodel or alteration means a remodel or alteration to an existing building where the total aggregate square footage of the building or structure altered is equal to or greater than 50% of the total building area of the existing building as defined by the Houston *Building Code*, prior to any city approved changes.

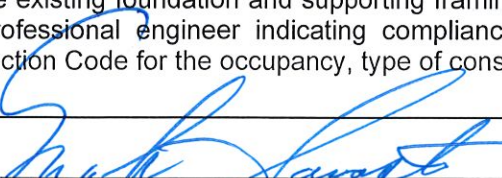
New Building means any new or rebuilt building resulting from a building demolition or deconstruction project, or a relocated building from a different address that is used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy defined by Chapter 3 of the *Houston Construction Code*.

Building Demolition means the permanent or temporary demolition, removal, or disassembly of any structure that meets either item 1 or 2 below:

- (1) The exterior walls and roof of a previously permitted existing building that results in the elimination, removal, or disassembly of 50% or more of the total square footage of the building area as defined by the Houston *Building Code*, or
- (2) The elimination, removal, or disassembly of 50% or more of the total linear feet of the exterior walls of any previously permitted existing building.

Permanent or temporary demolition, removal, or disassembly of either items 1 or 2 above at any time during an alteration constitutes a building demolition and requires plan review as a new structure. Proposed construction on an existing foundation of project types identified in items 1 or 2 above, relocated buildings, and new construction on new foundations will be reviewed as a new structure or building. No vertical building additions shall be approved on existing foundations without a structural analysis of the existing foundation and supporting framing, sealed, signed, and dated by a Texas registered professional engineer indicating compliance with all appropriate provisions of the Houston Construction Code for the occupancy, type of construction and number of stories proposed.

Approved:


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