Using the MN Conservation Code for Existing Buildings

The Conservation Code was developed specifically for construction in existing buildings. The requirements of this code are not as restrictive as the requirements of the Minnesota Building Code. Unless the conservation code sends you to the Minnesota Building Code, the specifics of the Minnesota Building Code may not apply. The code summary must provide a detailed accounting of the code path used to develop the project design. Each code utilized by the design professional should be listed. Specific critical code sections should also be addressed. A short note detailing how compliance is achieved by a particular code section should be provided. The goal is to lead the Plans Examiner through the code path **to show the design comp**lies with the codes.

Chapter 2 – Definitions – Note that **the definitions in this code pertain only when the Conservation Code is being used.** If your code path directs you to the Minnesota Building Code, then the Minnesota Building Code definitions should be used for that portion of the project.

Chapter 3 – Provisions for all Compliance Methods –This chapter applies to all existing building projects. Section 301 provides three potential compliance methods. This section also provides guidance for repairs and relocated buildings.

301.2 Repairs – Chapter 4
301.3.1 Prescriptive Compliance Method – Chapter 5
301.3.2 Work Area Compliance Method – Chapters 6-12
301.3.3 Performance Compliance Method – Chapter 13
301.4 Relocated/Moved Buildings – Chapter 14

Once a method is chosen for the project, the other methods DO NOT APPLY to the project. For example, if the Prescriptive Compliance Method is chosen, only Chapter 5 is used. A change of occupancy must only comply with section 506. The entire Chapter 10 on Change of Occupancy does not apply here & should not be used.

The chapters addressing **Construction Safety**, **Reference Standards**, **Fire Ratings for Archaic Materials and Assemblies (Resource A)** can be applied to all existing building projects and can be used in conjunction with any compliance method chosen by the design professional.

Chapter 33 & 16 Safeguards & Reference Standards These are the same requirements as the Minnesota Building Code. Use these chapters, charts and tables for determining the fire rating of existing building elements. The tables listed in the Minnesota Building Code are for new construction and should not be used to determine existing elements.

Repairs (Chapter 4):

Scope of Work - List the specific repair to the building with no alterations, additions or changes of occupancy
Construction Type – Don't just pick one. Do the research to use the proper construction type of record for the building
Occupancy – List the occupancies for the building (Did your research confirm this is correct?)
Sprinklers – Yes or no. If yes, list the specific type (Example: NFPA 13, NFPA13R)
Codes Used - 2020 Minnesota Conservation Code for Existing Buildings – Chapter 4 – Repairs.
No other code should be listed because no other code or section is required.

Prescriptive Compliance Method (Chapter 5):

Scope of Work - List the proposed work. The scope narrative helps to illustrate changes of occupancy or use. Section 506 identifies potential code paths based on use and hazard category.
Construction Type – Don't just pick one. Do the research to use the proper construction type of record for the building.
Occupancy – List the occupancies for the building, including both existing and proposed. Research may be required to identify existing occupancies.
Sprinklers – Yes or no. If yes, list the specific type (Example: NFPA 13, NFPA13R)
Codes Used - 2020 Minnesota Conservation Code for Existing Buildings – Chapter 5 – Prescriptive Compliance Method
2020 Minnesota Accessibility Code – Section 305 Accessibility for Existing Buildings. Then list the specific section(s) which apply to the project.
2020 Minnesota Energy Code – List only the sections which apply specifically to this project, like lighting or HVAC
2020 Minnesota Building Code – list this, **with the specific code sections**, only when the conservation code requires it.
Additional codes (such as NFPA) may be listed, but only if they apply to the project.

Work Area Compliance Method (Chapters 6-12):

Provide Alteration Level 1, 2, or 3. Chapters 10, 11, & 12 may also apply to your project. Provide those applicable sections as needed.
Scope of Work - List the proposed work. The scope narrative helps to illustrate changes of occupancy or use.
Construction Type – Don't just pick one. Do the research to use the proper construction type of record for the building
Occupancy – List the occupancies for the building, including both existing and proposed. Research may be required to identify existing occupancies.
Sprinklers – Yes or no. If yes, list the specific type (Example: NFPA 13, NFPA13R)
Codes Used - 2020 Minnesota Conservation Code for Existing Buildings
2020 Minnesota Accessibility Code – Section 305 Accessibility for Existing Buildings. Then list the specific section(s)
2020 Minnesota Energy Code – List only the sections which apply specifically to this project, like lighting or HVAC
2020 Minnesota Building Code – list this, **with the specific code sections**, only when the conservation code requires it.
Additional codes (such as NFPA) may be listed, but only if they apply to the project.

Performance Compliance Method (Chapter 13 and Minnesota Building Code)

Scope of Work - List the proposed work. The scope narrative helps to illustrate changes of occupancy or use.
Construction Type – Don't just pick one. Do the research to use the proper construction type of record for the building
Occupancy – List the occupancies for the building, including both existing and proposed. Research may be required to identify existing occupancies.
Sprinklers – Yes or no. If yes, list the specific type (Example: NFPA 13, NFPA13R)
Codes Used- 2020 Minnesota Conservation Code for Existing Buildings – Chapter 13
2020 Minnesota Accessibility Code – Section 305 Accessibility for Existing Buildings. Then list the specific section(s)
2020 Minnesota Energy Code – List only the sections which apply specifically to this project, like lighting or HVAC
2020 Minnesota Building Code – Will most likely be needed for this method. It is most helpful to link the Conservation code section to the Minnesota Building Code section needed to fulfill it.
Additional codes (such as NFPA) may be listed, but only if they apply to the project.

Relocated Buildings (Chapter 14):

Scope & Conformance – Buildings that are unsafe shall not be moved
Inspection Prior to Move – An inspection is required to establish building safety prior to moving the building
Requirements– new location of building must meet current zoning & building codes
Foundation – The connection & new foundation for a moved building shall comply with the Minnesota Building Code
Inspections after Relocation - The code official shall be authorized to inspect or require approved professionals to inspect at the expense of the owner the various structural parts of a relocated building to verify that structural components and connections have not sustained structural damage. Any repairs required by the code official as a result of the inspection shall be made prior to the final approval.