

**NC Department of Insurance  
Office of the State Fire Marshal - Engineering Division  
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**Partial Replacement of a Split System Heat Pump or Air Conditioner**

**Code:** 2012 Energy Conservation Code

**Date:** July 3, 2012

**Sections:** 503.2.3

**See Also:** 2012 Mechanical Code, Section 301.4

**Question:**

When the outdoor section of a split system residential heat pump or air conditioner must be replaced, is the replacement equipment required to perform at the current efficiency requirements for a new system? Also, what is the inspector's responsibility for the replacement equipment?

**Answer:**

No, it has been common practice for many years for an outdoor section of a split system residential heat pump or air conditioner to be replaced due to failure while retaining the indoor section since it remains suitable for continued use. The outdoor section may be replaced without requiring replacement of the indoor section given the replacement outdoor section is compatible with the indoor section and the pair will function acceptably together as a system. The inspector is responsible to assure that the replacement equipment is installed in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions. Because the system is not replaced in whole, the efficiency requirements for a new system do not apply.

This interpretation follows from a special joint meeting with the Mechanical Committee Chairman of the NC Building Code Council, Dept. of Insurance management and staff, inspectors from various jurisdictions, and the State Board of Plumbing, Heating, and Fire Sprinkler Contractors.