

NC & SC Crawl Space Building Code

Free Summary — Key Requirements for Homeowners and Contractors

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This summary covers the key requirements from NC Section R409 (2024 NC Residential Code, mandatory July 1 2025) and SC IRC R408.3. Share with your contractor before signing any encapsulation quote. Always confirm requirements with your local building department — requirements can vary by county.

NORTH CAROLINA — Section R409

Code Section	Section R409 — 2024 NC Residential Code (mandatory July 1, 2025)
Vapor Retarder	6-mil polyethylene Class I minimum Joints lapped 12 inches minimum Covers all exposed earth
Wall Liner Gap	3-inch minimum, 4-inch MAXIMUM termite inspection gap at top of liner Liner must NOT reach sill plate
Mechanical Drying	One of 5 methods required: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dehumidifier 15 pt/day min (R409.5.1)• HVAC supply air 1 CFM/30 sq ft• Exhaust fan 1 CFM/50 sq ft• House air fan 1 CFM/50 sq ft• Conditioned space design
Wall Insulation	R-10 continuous min (Zone 3A — most NC) R-15 (Zone 4A — NC mountains) Foam: maintain 3" gap top AND bottom
Access Opening	18 x 24 inches minimum Tight-fitting latched door Insulated to R-2 minimum
Foundation Vents	PROHIBITED in closed crawl space All gaps must be sealed
Drains	Drain to daylight or sump pump Not into crawl space floor
Permit Required?	YES — statewide NC OSFM confirmed Dec 2025 For all vented-to-closed conversions
Permit Cost	\$100–\$300 typical Includes building dept inspection

SOUTH CAROLINA — IRC R408.3

Code Section	IRC R408.3 with SC state amendments (varies more by jurisdiction than NC)
Vapor Retarder	ASTM E1745 Class A Joints lapped 6 inches, sealed or taped Edges 6 inches up stem wall, attached
Termite Gap	Not explicitly in IRC Required by local ordinance in most SC counties — confirm locally
Mechanical Drying	One method required: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exhaust fan 1 CFM/50 sq ft• Supply air 1 CFM/50 sq ft• Conditioned space design
Wall Insulation	R-10 continuous min (Zone 3A) Coastal SC (Zone 3): same R-10 Confirm with local energy code
Access Opening	Same IRC requirements as NC 18 x 24 inches minimum
Foundation Vents	PROHIBITED in unvented design Flood zone exceptions apply (coastal SC — check locally)
Drains	Same as NC — drain to daylight or sump pump, not to floor
Permit Required?	VARIABLES by jurisdiction No statewide requirement as clear as NC Always check with local building dept
Permit Cost	Varies by municipality Electrical work triggers permit in essentially all SC jurisdictions

- PERMIT — NC requires a permit for ALL vented-to-closed conversions. Ask: 'Will you pull the permit?' before signing.
- TERMITE GAP — NC code requires 3-inch minimum gap at top of liner. Liner to sill plate = non-compliant.
- CONTRACTOR LICENCE — Verify NC: nclbhc.org | SC projects over \$5,000: contractors.sc.gov
- COASTAL FLOOD ZONES — Check floodsmart.gov before sealing vents on any coastal NC or SC property.

Requirement	North Carolina	South Carolina
Vapor retarder min	6-mil Class I, 12" overlap	ASTM E1745 Class A, 6" overlap
Termite gap	3" min, 4" max — in code	Local ordinance — confirm locally
Mechanical drying	15 pt/day dehumidifier min	1 CFM/50 sq ft exhaust or supply
Wall insulation Zone 3A	R-10 continuous min	R-10 continuous min
Permit for conversion	Required statewide	Varies by jurisdiction
Code framework	NC-specific R409	IRC R408.3 + SC amendments

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