Answer

The mechanical and envelope requirements of the Standards do not apply if a building inspector determines that the space is unconditioned. Whether conditioned or unconditioned, per §100(c)2, the sunspace must still comply with the applicable lighting requirements of §150(k).

The sunspace is unconditioned if:

• The new space is not provided with heating or cooling (or supply ducts).
• The new space can be closed off from the existing house with weather stripped doors.
• The addition is not indirectly conditioned space.

A building official may require a sunspace to be conditioned if it appears to be habitable space, in which case the Standards apply.

1.5.3 Exempt Buildings

The following building types are exempt from the prescriptive and performance standards:

1. Seasonally occupied agricultural housing limited by state or federal agency contract to occupancy not more than 180 days in any calendar year (§100(e)2.D.); however, these buildings must comply with the applicable mandatory requirements.

2. Low-rise residential buildings that use no energy obtained from a depletable source, i.e. a fuel burning generator, for either lighting and/or water heating and obtain space heat from wood heating or other non-mechanical system. Mandatory requirements still apply. (Note: The Public Utilities Commission regulations require that a building must connect to the grid if it is within a certain distance of power lines)
3. Based on discretion of building officials, temporary buildings, temporary outdoor lighting or temporary lighting in an unconditioned building, or structures erected in response to a natural disaster (EXCEPTION 2 to §100(a)). These buildings may also be exempt from the mandatory requirements of the Standards.

1.5.4 Building Systems Covered

The low-rise residential standards affect the design of the building envelope; the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system; the water heating system; and the lighting system. The Standards do not apply to residential appliances (Appliance Efficiency Regulations may apply), elevators or dumbwaiters, or to portable lighting systems that are plugged into a wall outlet. Only hardwired lighting is regulated, which includes lighting that is a permanent part of the building.

1.5.5 Additions, Alterations and Repairs

Additions, alterations, and repairs are common construction projects for California homeowners. The Standards apply to both additions and alterations, but not to repairs. See Chapter 8 for details.

1. **Additions** are changes to an existing building that increase conditioned floor area and volume.

2. **Alterations**, that are not additions, are changes to a building’s envelope, space conditioning system, water heating system or lighting system.

3. **Repairs** are the reconstruction or renewal of any part of an existing building for the purpose of its maintenance. Replacement of any component systems (i.e. re-roofing), or equipment for which there are requirements in the Standards is considered an alteration and not a repair.

Example 1-3

**Question**
The Standards do not specify whether buildings damaged by natural disasters can be reconstructed to their original energy performance specifications. What requirements apply under these circumstances?

**Answer**
Buildings destroyed or damaged by natural disasters must comply with the energy code requirements in effect when the builder or owner applies for a permit to rebuild for those portions of the building that are being rebuilt.