

March 25, 2011

Dear ENERGY STAR Partner:

The transition from Version 2 to 3 of EPA's ENERGY STAR for New Homes Program represents the most significant change since the inception of the program. EPA created Version 2.5 as a critical but short-term transition specification that would help partners prepare for full implementation of Version 3 in 2012. During this period, EPA is willing to provide flexibility to help partners prepare for long-term success under v3.

In response to partner feedback, EPA made a policy decision in December 2010 to postpone the implementation date of Version 2.5 to homes permitted after April 1, 2011, instead of January 1, 2011. However, EPA did not change the corresponding July 1, 2011 completion deadline for homes permitted prior to April 1, 2011. Partners have noted that this policy created a very short timeframe for homes to be completed under Version 2 or improved to meet the requirements for Version 2.5. In response to this feedback, **EPA will allow homes permitted before April 1, 2011 to be qualified under Version 2 until December 31, 2011.** Homes completed after January 1, 2012 must be qualified under Version 3. EPA is not adjusting the implementation schedule for homes permitted after April 1, 2011 and strongly encourages partners to move to Version 2.5 as soon as possible.

Completing projects under Version 2.5 will give builders valuable experience implementing new energy efficiency upgrades and applying the expanded inspection checklists. Early feedback has confirmed that taking full advantage of Version 2.5 reduces errors and rework and identifies cost-saving strategies to meet the Version 3 guidelines. Without the experience gained through this transitional period, partners may face significant challenges qualifying homes under Version 3.

This change does not affect the Version 3 implementation date of January 1, 2012 (except for projects that fall under the low-income financing exemption detailed in the full timeline). Implementing the Version 3 guidelines on January 1, 2012 will protect the integrity of the program in light of aggressive code changes, maintain coordination with partner programs, and reward the significant investments already made by partners in preparation for Version 3.

It is important to note that regional and/or utility incentive programs may choose to retain the previous implementation timeline when defining the eligibility for special designations or incentives from their programs. Be sure to check with your local program representatives for more information. EPA will update the ENERGY STAR Web site and program materials soon to reflect this change. Thank you for your continued support of the program. Please direct questions to energystarhomes@energystar.gov.

Best,

The ENERGY STAR for New Homes Team

ENERGY STAR for Homes

ENERGY STAR New Homes Version 3 Implementation Schedule

Revised 03/25/2011

Permit Date ¹	Date of Final Inspection ²	
	4/1/2011	1/1/2012
Before 4/1/2011 ^{3,4}	v2	v3
Between 4/1/2011 and 12/31/2011 ⁴	v2.5	v3
On or After 1/1/2012 ⁵		v3

Version 2	Version 2: 2006 Guidelines
Version 2.5	Version 2.5: Core Version 3 energy efficiency measures with Air Barriers and Air Sealing sections of Thermal Enclosure System Rater Checklist; Other checklists completed but not enforced
Version 3	Version 3: Core Version 3 energy efficiency measures with all checklists completed and enforced

1. The rater may define the 'permit date' as either the date that the permit was issued or the date of the contract on the home.
2. The date of the final inspection for the home (i.e., the date at which all of the field inspections are complete for the home, not necessarily the date when the label is issued).
3. All low-income projects financed through low-income housing agencies may earn the ENERGY STAR under the last iteration of the guidelines, Version 2, until January 1, 2013 as long as the application for funding for those homes was received by the low-income housing agency before April 1, 2011 and the housing project includes at least one unit reserved for low-income tenants. If the application for funding is received between April 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011, then the homes must earn the ENERGY STAR under the Version 2.5 guidelines if completed before January 1, 2012, and under the Version 3 guidelines if completed after January 1, 2012. If the application for funding is received on or after January 1, 2012 then the homes must earn the ENERGY STAR under the Version 3 guidelines.
4. Homes can be qualified under the Version 2.5 guidelines at any time in 2011 at the discretion of builders and their raters. However, homes may not be qualified under Version 3 until January 1, 2012.
5. Where a utility or state sponsor is mandating or incentivizing early adoption of Version 3 in their area, EPA will allow the labeling of ENERGY STAR Version 3 prior to January 1, 2012 on a pilot program basis, provided that the sponsor meets certain requirements.