



March 25, 2011

Dear Partners,

This document provides information on the requirements for qualifying a home under ENERGY STAR for New Homes Version 2.5. Version 2.5 is same as Version 3 except for several changes that will help partners successfully transition from the Version 2 to 3 guidelines. Therefore, EPA has not created separate program documents specifically for Version 2.5. Instead, this letter serves to identify those parts of the Version 3 guidelines that will not be fully implemented under 2.5.

Version 2.5 adopts the three key features of Version 3, including a variable HERS index threshold, a Size Adjustment Factor, and new inspection checklists. The new Version 3 checklists, in particular, will require increased planning and coordination with builder clients and trades in order to successfully implement. For this reason, the new inspection checklists must be completed under Version 2.5, but an allowance is provided for deficiencies during this transitional period as described below. This will allow partners to identify what parts of the full Version 3 guidelines require further preparation and assistance before the requirements are fully phased in.

While raters will be required to complete Version 3 training provided by RESNET accredited training providers by January 1, 2012 to certify homes under Version 3, it is recommended, but not required, that raters participate in this training prior to completing the inspection checklists under Version 2.5. Similarly, while builders will be required to complete training provided by EPA and HVAC contractors will be required to complete training provided through industry associations by January 1, 2012, it is recommended, but not required, that these parties also participate in this training prior to completing their respective inspection checklists.

See below for the specific requirements of Version 2.5, organized by program document. These are represented graphically in Exhibit 1. Exhibit 2 illustrates the timeline for implementing both the Version 2.5 and Version 3 guidelines. Note that homes can be qualified under the Version 2.5 guidelines in advance of the phase-in dates in Exhibit 2, at the discretion of builders and their raters. However, homes shall not be qualified as Version 3 until January 1, 2012 except as part of a limited Version 3 pilot administered by an ENERGY STAR for Homes Sponsor or where required by a code jurisdiction.

Requirements for Version 2.5:

National Program Requirements

- Partners shall meet v3 of the National Program Requirements including the new ENERGY STAR Reference Design for the Prescriptive Path and the new ENERGY STAR HERS Index Target for the Performance Path. Any and all exceptions relate to the inspection checklists; those exceptions are listed below, organized by checklist.

Inspection Checklist – Thermal Enclosure System

- All items on this inspection checklist shall be completed (i.e., the rater must indicate whether each item must be corrected, whether the item is builder or rater approved, or whether the item is not applicable to the home).
- Homes shall pass all requirements of 'Section 3: Fully-Aligned Air Barriers' and 'Section 5: Air Sealing' to qualify. Noncompliance with items in other sections of this checklist shall not prevent homes from earning the label.
- Although the builder may assume responsibility for verifying a maximum of eight (8) items on this checklist under v3, this limit has been reduced to six (6) items for the two sections being enforced under v2.5, Sections 3 and 5.
- The v2 slab edge insulation exemption remains only for Version 2.5; therefore, up to 25% of the slab edge may be uninsulated in 2009 IECC Climate Zones 4 and 5.

Inspection Checklist – HVAC System Quality Installation for Contractors

- All items on this inspection checklist shall be completed. However, noncompliance with items will not prevent homes from earning the label.

Inspection Checklist – HVAC System Quality Installation for Raters

- All items on this inspection checklist shall be completed. However, noncompliance with items will not prevent homes from earning the label.
- Duct leakage to outdoors is maintained at the v2 levels and shall not exceed the following limits:
 - 4 CFM / 100 sq ft of conditioned floor area for the prescriptive path
 - 6 CFM / 100 sq ft of conditioned floor area for the performance path
- No limit on total duct leakage is imposed.

Inspection Checklist – Water Management System

- All items on this inspection checklist shall be completed. However, noncompliance with items will not prevent homes from earning the label.

Exhibit 1: Transition to ENERGY STAR Version 3

	Version 2	Version 2.5	Version 3
Performance Path	Fixed HERS Index	Variable HERS Index	
Prescriptive Path	Builder Option Package (BOP)	ENERGY STAR Reference Design	
House Size	No Impact on Requirements	Size Adjustment Factor	
Duct Leakage to Outside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≤ 4 CFM₂₅ per 100ft² CFA for Prescriptive Path ≤ 6 CFM₂₅ per 100ft² CFA for Performance Path 		≤ 4 CFM ₂₅ per 100ft ² CFA for both Prescriptive and Performance Paths
Total Duct Leakage	No Maximum Leakage		≤ 6 CFM ₂₅ per 100ft ² CFA
ENERGY STAR Labeled Products - Prescriptive Path	≥ 5 ENERGY STAR qualified products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where refrigerators, dishwashers, ceiling fans and exhaust fans are installed, products shall be ENERGY STAR qualified. ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs or pin-based lighting in 80% of fixtures in RESNET-defined Qualifying Light Fixture Locations shall be installed. (Alternate: ENERGY STAR Advanced Lighting Package) 	
ENERGY STAR Labeled Products - Performance Path	≥ 1 ENERGY STAR qualified product category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No requirements, though the Expanded ENERGY STAR Reference Design Definition is configured with an ENERGY STAR qualified refrigerator and dishwasher, qualified ceiling and exhaust fans, and fluorescent lighting in 80% of lighting fixtures in RESNET-defined Qualifying Light Fixture Locations. Therefore, the ENERGY STAR HERS Index Target must be met by either including efficient appliances and lighting or by offsetting their performance with other efficiency features. 	
HERS Scoring Limitations	Up to 20% of screw-in light bulb sockets may use CFLs to achieve HERS Index.	No limit on CFLs that may be used to achieve HERS index.	
	On-site power may not be used to achieve HERS index.	On-site power may be used if the home is larger than the Benchmark Home, but it can only contribute to incremental change in the HERS Index caused by the Size Adjustment Factor.	
Inspection Checklists	Thermal Bypass Checklist completed & enforced. Builder may verify up to six (6) items.	All sections of all v3 inspection checklists completed.	
		Sections 3 & 5 of Thermal Enclosure System Rater Checklist enforced. Builder may verify up to six (6) items.	All sections of all v3 inspection checklists enforced. Builder may verify up to eight (8) items of the Thermal Enclosure System checklist.
	25% of slab edge in CZ 4 & 5 may be uninsulated under v2 and v2.5	No slab edge insulation exemption	

Exhibit 2: ENERGY STAR for New Homes Version 3 Implementation Schedule

Permit Date ²	Date of Final Inspection ¹							
	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						
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 10%; text-align: center;">Version 2</td> <td>Version 2: 2006 Guidelines</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #e0f0ff; text-align: center;">Version 2.5</td> <td>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</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #00b0f0; color: white; text-align: center;">Version 3</td> <td>Version 3: Core Version 3 energy efficiency measures with all checklists completed and enforced</td> </tr> </table>			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
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 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).
2. 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.
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 in advance of the dates above at the discretion of builders and their raters. However, homes may not be qualified as 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.