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With the finalization of the ENERGY STAR for Homes Version 3 Guidelines last week, EPA is writing to notify partners on how they plan to roll-out the new requirements and what training and resources will be available.

EPA is committed to ensuring that our ENERGY STAR partners are prepared to successfully implement the new guidelines. Below is a brief summary of EPA's planned activities and implementation schedules:

Guidebooks: EPA is currently developing comprehensive guidebooks that will explain the construction details required in each of the ENERGY STAR for Homes Version 3 checklists. These guidebooks, along with accompanying PowerPoint slides, will be posted on the ENERGY STAR web site at www.energystar.gov/homes. EPA estimates that these materials will be available in early October 2010 (materials will be posted earlier, if completed).

In the interim, EPA will post narrated PowerPoint presentations on the ENERGY STAR Web site that can be used by partners to understand the key systems that will be required by the new guidelines. We expect to post these presentations by the end of May 2010.

Rater Training: EPA will be requiring that all Home Energy Raters take ENERGY STAR for Homes Version 3 training through a RESNET-accredited Training Provider to be eligible to qualify homes under the new guidelines. EPA estimates that this will be a two-day class and will be eligible for RESNET professional development credit. Training should be available at the beginning of 2011 and Raters will be required to take the training by the end of 2011 to continue qualifying homes for ENERGY STAR under the Version 3 guidelines.

Builder Training: EPA will be requiring that all builder partners take a self-guided, online ENERGY STAR Orientation/Version 3 training. This training, estimated to take an hour to complete, will be available by the end of 2010. Builders will be required to complete the online course by the end of 2011 as a condition of continued partnership with the program.

HVAC Contractors: EPA is currently working with representatives from the HVAC industry to ensure that there are a sufficient number of HVAC contractors qualified to deliver the HVAC Quality Installation requirements of the new guidelines. Beginning in 2012, only contractors who have the requisite training and industry recognition will be eligible to install HVAC systems in ENERGY STAR qualified homes. Builder and Rater partners should encourage their HVAC contractors to ensure that they meet these minimum requirements. More details on this will be available in the coming months.

Revised Communications Materials: EPA is currently developing a new ENERGY STAR qualified homes consumer brochure and online content that will focus on the features and benefits of homes that earn the ENERGY STAR label under the Version 3 guidelines. A new sticker label will also be developed that will allow partners to identify which version of the guidelines a home was qualified under. EPA plans to have these materials available by the end of 2010.

Should you have any questions, please contact the program at: energystarhomes@energystar.gov.