



Version 3 Update: October 27, 2010

A Note from the ENERGY STAR Team

This is a time of tremendous improvement for the ENERGY STAR for New Homes program. The new Version 3 guidelines will touch every one of our partners and all of the tools and resources that we offer, as well as create the need for a host of new guidance materials and training opportunities. The ENERGY STAR team is working diligently to help ensure a smooth transition to the new guidelines and is committed to providing our partners with regular updates of program new developments.

Updated Version 3 Program Documents

Since posting the ENERGY STAR for Homes Version 3 guidelines on April 8, 2010, EPA has modified, clarified and refined various aspects of the program documents, primarily in response to partner questions and comments. As a result of these efforts, EPA recently posted 'Revision 01' to the Version 3 guidelines and has created a [document summarizing these edits](#). Each edit has been categorized as a Change, Clarification, or Refinement. Many of the edits are refinements or clarifications, which should have little to no impact on the way that most partners comply with the program. Of the changes, most were made to the HVAC System Quality Installation Contractor and Rater checklists to provide additional oversight by the rater of the contractor, and Water Management System checklist to correct the exemptions that are allowed in dry climates. For more information, please see the [revised guidelines documents](#), which contain all policy changes. Also note that EPA is making a clarification to the Version 3 implementation timeline that is discussed in detail at the end of this newsletter. Please be sure to read this important information.

It is expected that EPA will continue to revise the v3 guidelines during their implementation in response to partner questions and evolving standards. With each new release of the guidelines, the program documents will be updated by incrementing a "Revision" tag in the header (e.g., Revision 01, Revision 02) and the footnote will be updated to reflect the latest revision date.

Revisions will be made on an as needed basis. However, it is expected that the guidelines will not be updated more frequently than every three months and that after a year of implementation, the updates will slow to every six months. Partners may begin using the latest version of the guidelines upon their release for all homes qualified after that date. However, unless stated otherwise, partners should begin to use the latest version for all homes permitted more than 60 days after the release of the revisions. With each new release of the guidelines, partners will be notified by email. In addition, the revised program documents and version tracking document will be posted to the EPA Website at www.energystar.gov/homes.

Version 3 Training Update

Recorded Presentations: EPA recently posted three narrated presentations on the ENERGY STAR Website that can be used by partners to understand the key requirements of the new inspection checklists:

- [Module 1: Getting the Thermal Enclosure System Right](#) (97MB)
- [Module 2: Getting the HVAC System Right](#) (102MB)
- [Module 3: Getting the Water Management System Right](#) (50MB)

Guidebooks: EPA is currently finalizing a set of comprehensive guidebooks that will explain the construction details required in each of the new ENERGY STAR for Homes Version 3 checklists. These guidebooks, along with accompanying PowerPoint slides, will be posted on the ENERGY STAR Website at www.energystar.gov/homes. EPA anticipates that these materials will be available by the end of the year.

Required Training Elements: To be eligible to label homes under the ENERGY STAR Version 3 guidelines, the builder, Rater, and HVAC contractor must all have completed required training. EPA, working with key program stakeholders like RESNET, is in the process of developing training curricula that have already begun to roll-out to partners:

- **For Training Providers:** In November, EPA will be holding four training sessions to provide RESNET-accredited Training Providers with the information they will need to offer ENERGY STAR for Homes Version 3 training for raters in 2011. If you work for a RESNET-accredited Training Provider and have not yet received the registration invitation for these sessions, please email us at energystarhomes@energystar.gov.
- **For Raters:** Starting in early September, EPA began offering v2.5 training for raters through on-line webinars. These free webinars explain the basics of how to qualify a home for ENERGY STAR using the Version 2.5 requirements and provide guidance on how Raters can best work with their builders to prepare for the upcoming program changes. EPA will continue to offer these webinars as long as there is sufficient demand.

EPA also will be requiring that all Home Energy Rater partners take ENERGY STAR for Homes Version 3 training through a RESNET-accredited Training Provider to be eligible to qualify homes under the new guidelines. Training will be available at the beginning of 2011, and Raters will be required to take the training by January 1, 2012 to continue qualifying homes as ENERGY STAR. This requirement applies to all existing ENERGY STAR Rater partners, as well as any new Raters who sign onto the program in the future. Raters will be able to look to the [RESNET website](#) for additional information as classes become available.

The training will cover a range of topics that Raters will need to know to qualify homes under ENERGY STAR Version 3, including the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Home, Benchmark Home/Size Adjustment Factor, as well as technical details for completing the required ENERGY STAR Inspection Checklists (Thermal Enclosure, Water Management System, and HVAC Quality Installation). ENERGY STAR for Homes Version 3 training will count towards RESNET required Professional Development credit.

Providers and Raters should also note that, under a new policy (see below), builders will be required to have a fully-active partnership with ENERGY STAR (including completed ENERGY STAR Orientation training) to be eligible to label homes under the ENERGY STAR Version 3 guidelines. As a result, beginning in 2012, the ENERGY STAR on-line reporting system will no longer allow the addition of 'non-partner builders' when reporting homes.

- **For Builders:** All builder partners will be required to take a self-guided, online ENERGY STAR Orientation training that will cover Version 3 guideline information, partner responsibilities, and available resources. This training, estimated to take about an hour to complete, will be available in early January, 2011. Builders will be required to complete the online course by the end of 2011 as a condition of continued partnership with the program. Also, beginning in 2011, all new builders seeking to partner with ENERGY STAR will need to complete the training before their partnership is activated. One company representative per builder will be required to complete the course; however, additional representatives are encouraged to also complete the training.
- **For HVAC Contractors:** EPA is currently working with representatives from the HVAC contractor industry to help ensure that there are a sufficient number of companies qualified to deliver the HVAC Quality Installation requirements of the new guidelines. Builders and Raters need to be aware that only contractors who have demonstrated the requisite training/experience and have been credentialed by an EPA- recognized industry association, will be eligible to install HVAC systems in ENERGY STAR homes qualified under the Version 3 guidelines. Builder and Rater partners should encourage their HVAC contractors to ensure that they meet these requirements. More details on HVAC contractor training will be available in the coming months.

Version 3 Implementation Timeline Clarification

The ENERGY STAR Version 2.5 guidelines are designed to allow partners a period of time to transition to the more rigorous Version 3 specification. EPA believes that partners should take full advantage of this phase-in period to ensure a smooth transition to the new guidelines, in particular the requirements of the new inspection checklists.

Further, as full implementation of the new Version 3 guidelines will require that the builder, Rater, and HVAC contractor all complete specific training, EPA needs to ensure that all partners and trades have equal access to this training before Version 3 homes are widely available. For these reasons, EPA is clarifying the roll-out policy for Version 3; **specifically, no homes may be qualified under Version 3 until January 1, 2012.***

The overall timeline for the transition from Version 2 (v2) to Version 3 (v3) is summarized in the text and graphic below:

- Single family homes permitted before 2011 can continue to be qualified under v2 through June 30, 2011 (if this deadline is missed, homes will be subject to v2.5 (for homes completed between 7/1/11 and 12/31/11) or v3 (for homes completed beginning 1/1/12).
- Multi-family homes permitted before 2011 can continue to be qualified under v2 until December 31, 2011 (if this deadline is missed, homes will be subject to v3).
- Multi-family homes financed through low-income housing agencies that were permitted before 2011 OR had funding awarded prior to 2011 can continue to be qualified under v2 until January 1, 2013 (if this deadline is missed, homes will be subject to v3).
- Any single or multi-family home that can be qualified under v2 can be qualified under v2.5 at the builder's discretion.
- All homes permitted AND completed in 2011 must be qualified under v2.5 (if this deadline is missed, homes will be subject to v3).
- All homes completed on or after January 1, 2012 must be qualified under v3.
- No homes may be qualified as v3 prior to January 1, 2012.*

* The exception to this policy is where a utility or state sponsor is mandating or incentivizing early adoption of Version 3 in their area. In these cases, EPA will permit the labeling of ENERGY STAR Version 3 homes prior to January 1, 2012 on a pilot program basis, provided that the sponsor ensures adequate access to required training for all local program partners. This can be most easily met by directly sponsoring training sessions for participants in the area. EPA can provide additional guidance to those sponsors who are considering early implementation initiatives.

Unique Regional Specifications

As a result of unique climates and advanced codes in some states, EPA is working with local stakeholders to develop customized Version 3 specifications for California, Florida, the Pacific Northwest, and Hawaii. Look out for communication regarding these specifications in coming months.