

ENERGY STAR[®]

Residential New Construction Programs

Historical Document

This document is provided for reference because it has been superseded by a more recent Version or Revision. Please find current program documents on the [Program Requirements](#) webpage.

Use of older Versions and Revisions, such as this document, are typically limited to homes and buildings with a permit date (or, for manufactured homes, a production date) prior to a specified date. Consult the [Implementation Timeline](#) table to assess whether a home or apartment is still eligible to be certified using this document.

For questions or more information, contact us at energystarhome@energystar.gov.



ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes National Rater Field Checklist, Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2 (Rev. 13)

Home Address: _____		City: _____		State: _____		Permit Date: _____	
Thermal Enclosure System		Must Correct	Builder Verified ¹	Rater Verified ²	N/A ³		
1. High-Performance Fenestration & Insulation							
1.1 Fenestration meets or exceeds specification in Item 2.1 of the National Rater Design Review Checklist.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-		
1.2 Insulation meets or exceeds specification in Item 3.1 of the National Rater Design Review Checklist.		<input type="checkbox"/>	Up to 10% <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-		
1.3 All insulation achieves Grade I install. per ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301. Alternatives in Footnote 4. ^{4,5}		<input type="checkbox"/>	Up to 10% <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-		
2. Fully-Aligned Air Barriers⁶ - At each insulated location below, a complete air barrier is provided that is fully aligned as follows:							
Ceilings: At interior or exterior horizontal surface of ceiling insulation in Climate Zones 1-3; at interior horizontal surface of ceiling insulation in Climate Zones 4-8. Also, at exterior vertical surface of ceiling insulation in all climate zones (e.g., using a wind baffle that extends to the full height of the insulation in every bay or a tabbed baffle in each bay with a soffit vent that prevents wind washing in adjacent bays). ^{7,8}							
2.1 Dropped ceilings / soffits below unconditioned attics, and all other ceilings.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Walls: At exterior vertical surface of wall insulation in all climate zones; also at interior vertical surface of wall insulation in Climate Zones 4-8. ^{8,9}							
2.2 Walls behind showers, tubs, staircases, and fireplaces.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2.3 Attic knee walls and skylight shaft walls. ¹⁰		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2.4 Walls adjoining porch roofs or garages.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2.5 Double-walls and all other exterior walls.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-		
Floors: At exterior vertical surface of floor insulation in all climate zones and, if over unconditioned space, also at interior horizontal surface including supports to ensure alignment. Alternatives in Footnotes 12 & 13. ^{11,12,13}							
2.6 Floors above garages, floors above unconditioned basements or crawlspaces, and cantilevered floors.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2.7 All other floors adjoining unconditioned space (e.g., rim / band joists at exterior wall or at porch roof).		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3. Reduced Thermal Bridging							
3.1 For insulated ceilings with attic space above (i.e., non-cathedralized), Grade I insulation extends to the inside face of the exterior wall below and is $\geq R-21$ in CZ 1-5; $\geq R-30$ in CZ 6-8. ^{8,14}		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3.2 For slabs on grade in CZ 4-8, 100% of slab edge insulated to $\geq R-5$ at the depth specified by the 2009 IECC and aligned with the thermal boundary of the walls. ^{8,15,16}		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3.3 Insulation beneath attic platforms (e.g., HVAC platforms, walkways) $\geq R-21$ in CZ 1-5; $\geq R-30$ in CZ 6-8. ⁸		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3.4 At above-grade walls separating conditioned from unconditioned space, one of the following options used (rim / band joists exempted): ¹⁷							
3.4.1 Continuous rigid insulation, insulated siding, or combination of the two is: $\geq R-3$ in CZ 1-4; $\geq R-5$ in CZ 5-8 ^{8,18,19,20} , OR ;		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3.4.2 Structural Insulated Panels OR ; Insulated Concrete Forms OR ; Double-wall framing OR ; ^{18,21}		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3.4.3 Advanced framing, including all of the items below: ²²							
3.4.3a Corners insulated $\geq R-6$ to edge ²³ , AND ;		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3.4.3b Headers above windows & doors insulated $\geq R-3$ for 2x4 framing or equivalent cavity width, and $\geq R-5$ for all other assemblies (e.g., with 2x6 framing) ²⁴ , AND ;		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3.4.3c Framing limited at all windows & doors to one pair of king studs, plus one pair of jack studs per window opening to support the header and sill, AND ;		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3.4.3d Interior / exterior wall intersections insulated to same R-value as rest of exterior wall, ²⁵ AND ;		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3.4.3e Minimum stud spacing of 16 in. o.c. for 2x4 framing in all Climate Zones and, in CZ 6-8, 24 in. o.c. for 2x6 framing. ^{8,26}		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4. Air Sealing (Unless otherwise noted below, "sealed" indicates the use of caulk, foam, or equivalent material)							
4.1 Ducts, flues, shafts, plumbing, piping, wiring, exhaust fans, & other penetrations to unconditioned space sealed, with blocking / flashing as needed.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-		
4.2 Recessed lighting fixtures adjacent to unconditioned space ICAT labeled and gasketed. Also, if in insulated ceiling without attic above, exterior surface of fixture insulated to $\geq R-10$ in CZ 4-8. ⁸		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4.3 Above-grade sill plates adjacent to conditioned space sealed to foundation or sub-floor. Gasket also placed beneath above-grade sill plate if resting atop concrete / masonry & adjacent to cond. space. ^{27,28}		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4.4 Continuous top plate or blocking is at top of walls adjoining unconditioned space, and sealed.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4.5 Drywall sealed to top plate at all unconditioned attic / wall interfaces using caulk, foam, drywall adhesive (but not other construction adhesives), or equivalent material. Either apply sealant directly between drywall and top plate or to the seam between the two from the attic above.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4.6 Rough opening around windows & exterior doors sealed. ²⁹		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-		
4.7 Walls that separate attached garages from occupiable space sealed and, also, an air barrier installed and sealed at floor cavities aligned with these walls.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4.8 In multifamily buildings, the gap between the common wall (e.g., the drywall shaft wall) and the structural framing between units sealed at all exterior boundaries.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4.9 Doors adjacent to unconditioned space (e.g., attics, garages, basements) or ambient conditions made substantially air-tight with weatherstripping or equivalent gasket.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4.10 Attic access panels, drop-down stairs, & whole-house fans equipped with durable $\geq R-10$ cover that is gasketed (i.e., not caulked). Fan covers either installed on house side or mechanically operated. ³⁰		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		



ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes

National Rater Field Checklist, Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2 (Rev. 13)

HVAC System ³¹				Must Correct	Rater Verified ²	N/A ³
5. Heating & Cooling Equipment - Complete Track A - HVAC Grading ³² or Track B - HVAC Credential ³³						
Track A	5a.1 Blower fan volumetric airflow is Grade I or II per ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5a.2 Blower fan watt draw is Grade I or II per ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5a.3 Refrigerant charge is Grade I per ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310. See Footnote 34 for exemptions. ³⁴			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Track B	5b.1 HVAC manufacturer & model number on installed equipment matches either of the following (check box): ³⁵ <input type="checkbox"/> National HVAC Design Report <input type="checkbox"/> Written approval received from designer			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5b.2 External static pressure measured by Rater at contractor-provided test locations and documented below: ³⁶ Return-Side External Static Pressure: _____ IWC Supply-Side External Static Pressure: _____ IWC			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5b.3 Permitted, but not required: National HVAC Commissioning Checklist collected, with no items left blank.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Duct Quality Installation (Applies to Heating, Cooling, Ventilation, Exhaust, & Pressure Balancing Ducts, Unless Noted in Footnote)						
6.1 Ductwork installed without kinks, sharp bends, compressions, or excessive coiled flexible ductwork. ³⁷				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2 Bedrooms pressure-balanced (e.g., using transfer grilles, jump ducts, dedicated return ducts, undercut doors) to achieve a Rater-measured pressure differential ≥ -3 Pa and $\leq +3$ Pa with respect to the main body of the house when all air handlers are operating. Test configuration and an alternative compliance option in Footnote 38. ³⁸				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
6.3 All supply and return ducts in unconditioned space, including connections to trunk ducts, are insulated to $\geq R-6$ ³⁹				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.4 Rater-measured total duct leakage meets one of the following two options. Alternative in Footnote 41: ^{40, 41, 42}						
6.4.1 <u>Rough-in</u> : The greater of ≤ 4 CFM25 per 100 sq. ft. of CFA or ≤ 40 CFM25, with air handler & all ducts, building cavities used as ducts, & duct boots installed. All duct boots sealed to finished surface, Rater-verified at final. ⁴³				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.4.2 <u>Final</u> : The greater of ≤ 8 CFM25 per 100 sq. ft. of CFA or ≤ 80 CFM25, with the air handler & all ducts, building cavities used as ducts, duct boots, & register grilles atop the finished surface (e.g., drywall, floor) installed. ⁴⁴				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.5 Rater-measured duct leakage to outdoors the greater of ≤ 4 CFM25 per 100 sq. ft. of CFA or ≤ 40 CFM25. ^{40, 45}				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Dwelling Unit Mechanical Ventilation Systems ("Vent System") ⁴⁶ & Inlets in Return Duct ⁴⁷						
7.1 Rater-measured ventilation rate is within either ± 15 CFM or $\pm 15\%$ of design report value. ⁴⁸				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
7.2 A readily-accessible ventilation override control installed and also labeled if its function is not obvious (e.g., a label is required for a toggle wall switch, but not for a switch that's on the ventilation equipment). ⁴⁹				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
7.3 For any outdoor air inlet connected to a ducted return of the HVAC system (Complete if present; otherwise check "N/A"): ⁴⁷						<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3.1 Controls automatically restrict airflow using a motorized damper during vent. off-cycle and occupant override. ⁵⁰				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
7.3.2 Rater-measured vent. rate is ≤ 15 CFM or 15% above design value at highest HVAC fan speed. Alt. in Fn. 51. ⁵¹				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
7.4 System fan rated ≤ 3 sones if intermittent and ≤ 1 sone if continuous, or exempted. ⁵²				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
7.5 If Vent System controller operates the HVAC fan, then HVAC fan operation is intermittent and either the fan type is ECM / ICM or the controls will reduce the run-time by accounting for HVAC system heating or cooling hours. ⁵³				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.6 Bathroom fans are ENERGY STAR certified if used as part of the Vent System. ⁵⁴				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.7 Air inlet location (Complete if ventilation air inlet location was specified on design report; otherwise check "N/A"): ^{55, 56}						<input type="checkbox"/>
7.7.1 Inlet pulls ventilation air directly from outdoors and not from attic, crawlspace, garage, or adjacent dwelling unit.				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
7.7.2 Inlet is ≥ 2 ft. above grade or roof deck; ≥ 10 ft. of stretched-string distance from known contamination sources not exiting the roof, and ≥ 3 ft. distance from dryer exhausts and sources exiting the roof. ⁵⁷				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
7.7.3 Inlet is provided with rodent / insect screen with ≤ 0.5 inch mesh.				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
8. Local Mechanical Exhaust – In each kitchen and bathroom, a system is installed that exhausts directly to the outdoors and meets one of the following Rater-measured airflow and manufacturer-rated sound level standards: ^{48, 58}						
Location		Continuous Rate	Intermittent Rate ⁵⁹			
8.1 Kitchen	Airflow	≥ 5 ACH, based on kitchen volume ^{60, 61}	≥ 100 CFM and, if not integrated with range, also ≥ 5 ACH based on kitchen volume ^{60, 61, 62}	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
	Sound	Recommended: ≤ 1 sone	Recommended: ≤ 3 sones			
8.2 Bathroom	Airflow	≥ 20 CFM	≥ 50 CFM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
	Sound	Required: ≤ 1 sone	Recommended: ≤ 3 sones			
9. Filtration						
9.1 MERV 6+ filter(s) installed in each ducted mech. system, designed so all return and mechanically supplied outdoor air passes through filter(s) prior to conditioning, and located to facilitate occupant access & regular service. ⁶³				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.2 Filter access panel includes gasket and fits snugly against exposed edge of filter when closed to prevent bypass. ⁶⁴				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Combustion Appliances						
10.1 Furnaces, boilers, & water heaters are mechanically drafted or direct-vented. Alternatives in Footnote 67. ^{65, 66, 67}				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.2 Fireplaces are mechanically drafted or direct-vented. Alternatives in Footnote 68. ^{65, 66, 68}				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.3 No unvented combustion appliances other than cooking ranges or ovens are located inside the home's pressure boundary. Alternative in Footnote 70. ^{65, 69, 70}				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rater Name: _____		Rater Pre-Drywall Inspection Date ⁷¹ : _____		Rater Initials: _____		
Rater Name: _____		Rater Final Inspection Date ⁷² : _____		Rater Initials: _____		
Builder Employee: _____		Builder Inspection Date: _____		Builder Initials: _____		



ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes National Rater Field Checklist, Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2 (Rev. 13)

Footnotes

1. At the discretion of the Rater, the builder may verify up to eight items in Sections 1-4 of this Checklist. When this allowance is used for Item 1.2 or 1.3, a maximum of 10% of the total surface area of the non-adiabatic insulated assemblies are permitted to be builder-verified; the remainder must be verified by the Rater. When exercised, the builder's responsibility will be formally acknowledged by the builder signing off on the checklist for the item(s) that they verified. However, if a quality assurance review indicates that Items have not been successfully completed, the Rater will be responsible for facilitating corrective action.
2. All items shall be verified for each certified home and sampling protocols shall not be used. The term 'Rater' refers to the person(s) completing the third-party verification required for certification. The person(s) shall: a) be a Certified Rater or Approved Inspector, as defined by ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, or an equivalent designation as determined by a Home Certification Organization (HCO); and, b) have attended and successfully completed an EPA-recognized training class. See www.energystar.gov/newhomestraining.
3. The column titled "N/A," which denotes items that are "not applicable," should be used when the checklist Item is not present in the home or conflicts with local requirements.
4. Two alternatives are provided: a) Grade II cavity insulation is permitted to be used for assemblies that contain a layer of continuous, air impermeable insulation $\geq R-3$ in Climate Zones 1 to 4, $\geq R-5$ in Climate Zones 5 to 8;⁸ b) Grade II batts are permitted to be used in floors if they fill the full width and depth of the floor cavity, even when compression occurs due to excess insulation, as long as the R-value of the batts has been appropriately assessed based on manufacturer guidance and the only defect preventing the insulation from achieving Grade I is the compression caused by the excess insulation.
5. Ensure compliance with this requirement using ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301 including all Addenda and Normative Appendices, with new versions and Addenda implemented according to the schedule defined by the HCO that the home is being certified under, with approved exceptions listed at www.energystar.gov/ERIEExceptions.
6. For purposes of this Checklist, an air barrier is defined as any durable solid material that blocks air flow between conditioned space and unconditioned space, including necessary sealing to block excessive air flow at edges and seams and adequate support to resist positive and negative pressures without displacement or damage. EPA recommends, but does not require, rigid air barriers.
Open-cell or closed-cell foam shall have a finished thickness ≥ 5.5 in. or 1.5 in., respectively, to qualify as an air barrier unless the manufacturer indicates otherwise.
If flexible air barriers such as house wrap are used, they shall be fully sealed at all seams and edges and supported using fasteners with caps or heads ≥ 1 in. diameter unless otherwise indicated by the manufacturer. Flexible air barriers shall not be made of kraft paper, paper-based products, or other materials that are easily torn. If polyethylene is used, its thickness shall be ≥ 6 mil.
7. All insulated ceiling surfaces, regardless of slope (e.g., cathedral ceilings, tray ceilings, conditioned attic roof decks, flat ceilings, sloped ceilings), must meet the requirements for ceilings.
8. For all Versions except National v3.2, the 2009 IECC Climate Zone designations are applicable, as defined and illustrated in [Section R301](#) of the code. For National Version 3.2, the 2021 IECC Climate Zone designations are applicable, as defined and illustrated in [Section R301](#) of the code. Note that some locations have shifted to a different Climate Zone in the 2021 IECC compared to prior editions.
9. All insulated vertical surfaces are considered walls (e.g., above and below grade exterior walls, knee walls) and must meet the air barrier requirements for walls. The following exceptions apply: air barriers recommended, but not required, in adiabatic walls in multifamily dwellings; and, in Climate Zones 4 through 8, an air barrier at the interior vertical surface of insulation is recommended but not required in basement walls or crawlspace walls.⁸ For the purpose of these exceptions, a basement or crawlspace is a space for which $\geq 40\%$ of the total gross wall area is below-grade.
10. Exterior air barriers are not required for attic knee walls that are ≤ 24 in. in height if an interior air barrier is provided and insulation extends in all directions from the top of this interior air barrier into unconditioned space at the following levels: CZ 1-5: $\geq R-21$; CZ 6-8: $\geq R-30$.⁸
11. EPA highly recommends, but does not require, an air barrier at the interior vertical surface of floor insulation in Climate Zones 4-8.⁸
12. Examples of supports necessary for permanent contact include staves for batt insulation or netting for blown-in insulation. Alternatively, supports are not required if batts fill the full depth of the floor cavity, even when compression occurs due to excess insulation, as long as the R-value of the batts has been appropriately assessed based on manufacturer guidance and the only defect preventing the insulation from achieving the required installation grade is the compression caused by the excess insulation.
13. Alternatively, an air barrier is permitted to be installed at the exterior horizontal surface of the floor insulation if the insulation is installed in contact with this air barrier, the exterior vertical surfaces of the floor cavity are also insulated, and air barriers are included at the exterior vertical surfaces of this insulation.
14. The minimum designated R-values must be achieved regardless of the trade-offs determined using an equivalent U-factor or UA alternative calculation. Note that if the minimum designated values are used, then higher insulation values may be needed elsewhere to meet Item 1.2. Also, note that these requirements can be met by using any available strategy, such as a raised-heel truss, alternate framing that provides adequate space, and / or high-density insulation.
15. Slab edge insulation is only required for slab-on-grade floors with a floor surface less than 12 inches below grade. Slab insulation shall extend to the top of the slab to provide a complete thermal break. If the top edge of the insulation is installed between the exterior wall and the edge of an interior, or exterior, slab, it shall be permitted to be cut at a 45-degree angle away from the exterior wall. The following alternatives apply:
 - a. Slab assemblies with an F-Factor equivalent to that of the insulation required in Item 3.2 may be used. F-Factors shall be determined using Table A6.3.1-1 from ASHRAE 90.1-2022 Appendix A. See www.energystar.gov/F-Factor for more details.
 - b. The thermal break is permitted to be created using $\geq R-3$ rigid insulation on top of the slab. In such cases, up to 10% of the slab surface is permitted to not be insulated (e.g., for sleepers, for sill plates). Insulation installed on top of slab shall be covered by a durable floor surface (e.g., hardwood, tile, carpet).
16. Where an insulated wall separates a garage, patio, porch, or other unconditioned space from the conditioned space of the house, slab insulation shall also be installed at this interface to provide a thermal break between the conditioned and unconditioned slab. Where specific details cannot



ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes

National Rater Field Checklist, Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2 (Rev. 13)

meet this requirement, partners shall provide the detail to EPA to request an exemption prior to the home's certification. EPA will compile exempted details and work with industry to develop feasible details for use in future revisions to the program. A list of currently exempted details is available at: energystar.gov/slabeledge.

17. Mass walls utilized as the thermal mass component of a passive solar design (e.g., a Trombe wall) are exempt from this Item. To be eligible for this exemption, the passive solar design shall be comprised of the following five components: an aperture or collector, an absorber, thermal mass, a distribution system, and a control system. For more information, see: energy.gov/sites/prod/files/guide_to_passive_solar_home_design.pdf.
Mass walls that are not part of a passive solar design (e.g., CMU block or log home enclosure) shall either utilize the strategies outlined in Item 3.4 or the pathway in the assembly with the least thermal resistance, as determined using a method consistent with the 2013 ASHRAE Handbook of Fundamentals, shall provide $\geq 50\%$ of the applicable assembly resistance, defined as the reciprocal of the mass wall equivalent U-factor in the 2009 IECC Table 402.1.3. Documentation identifying the pathway with the least thermal resistance and its resistance value shall be collected by the Rater and any Builder Verified or Rater Verified box under Item 3.4 shall be checked.
18. Up to 10% of the total exterior wall surface area is exempted from the reduced thermal bridging requirements to accommodate intentional designed details (e.g., architectural details such as thermal fins, wing walls, or masonry fireplaces; structural details, such as steel columns). It shall be apparent to the Rater that the exempted areas are intentional designed details or the exempted area shall be documented in a plan provided by the builder, architect, or engineer. The Rater need not evaluate the necessity of the designed detail to certify the home.
19. If used, insulated siding shall be attached directly over a water-resistive barrier and sheathing. In addition, it shall provide the required R-value as demonstrated through either testing in accordance with ASTM C 1363 or by attaining the required R-value at its minimum thickness. Insulated sheathing rated for water protection can be used as a water resistant barrier if all seams are taped and sealed. If non-insulated structural sheathing is used at corners, the advanced framing details listed in Item 3.4.3 shall be met for those wall sections.
20. Steel framing shall meet the reduced thermal bridging requirements by complying with Item 3.4.1 of the Checklist.
21. Double-wall framing is defined as any framing method that ensures a continuous layer of insulation covering the studs to at least the R-value required in Item 3.4.1 of the Checklist, such as offset double-stud walls, aligned double-stud walls with continuous insulation between the adjacent stud faces, or single-stud walls with 2x2 or 2x3 cross-framing. In all cases, insulation shall fill the entire wall cavity from the interior to exterior sheathing except at windows, doors and other penetrations.
22. All advanced framing details shall be met except where the builder, architect, or engineer provides a framing plan that encompasses the details in question, indicating that structural members are required at these locations and including the rationale for these members (e.g., full-depth solid framing is required at wall corners or interior / exterior wall intersections for shear strength, a full-depth solid header is required above a window to transfer load to jacks studs, additional jack studs are required to support transferred loads, additional cripple studs are required to maintain on-center spacing, or stud spacing must be reduced to support multiple stories in a multifamily building). The Rater shall retain a copy of the detail and rationale for their records, but need not evaluate the rationale to certify the home.
23. All exterior corners shall be constructed to allow access for the installation of $\geq R-6$ insulation that extends to the exterior wall sheathing. Examples of compliance options include standard-density insulation with alternative framing techniques, such as using three studs per corner, or high-density insulation (e.g., spray foam) with standard framing techniques.
24. Compliance options include continuous rigid insulation sheathing, SIP headers, other prefabricated insulated headers, single-member or two-member headers with insulation either in between or on one side, or an equivalent assembly. R-value requirement refers to manufacturer's nominal insulation value.
25. Insulation shall run behind interior / exterior wall intersections using ladder blocking, full length 2x6 or 1x6 furring behind the first partition stud, drywall clips, or other equivalent alternative.
26. In Climate Zones 6 – 8, a minimum stud spacing of 16 in. o.c. is permitted to be used with 2x6 framing if $\geq R-20.0$ wall cavity insulation is achieved. However, all 2x6 framing with stud spacing of 16 in. o.c. in Climate Zones 6 – 8 shall have $\geq R-20.0$ wall cavity insulation installed regardless of any framing plan or alternative equivalent total UA calculation.⁸
27. Existing sill plates (e.g., in a home undergoing a gut rehabilitation) on the interior side of structural masonry or monolithic walls are exempt from this Item. In addition, other existing sill plates resting atop concrete or masonry and adjacent to conditioned space are permitted, in lieu of using a gasket, to be sealed with caulk, foam, or equivalent material at both the interior seam between the sill plate and the subfloor and the seam between the top of the sill plate and the sheathing.
28. In Climate Zones 1 through 3, a continuous stucco cladding system adjacent to sill and bottom plates is permitted to be used in lieu of sealing plates to foundation or sub-floor with caulk, foam, or equivalent material.⁸
29. In Climate Zones 1 through 3, a continuous stucco cladding system sealed to windows and doors is permitted to be used in lieu of sealing rough openings with caulk or foam.⁸
30. Examples of durable covers include, but are not limited to, pre-fabricated covers with integral insulation, rigid foam adhered to cover with adhesive, or batt insulation mechanically fastened to the cover (e.g., using bolts, metal wire, or metal strapping).
31. This Checklist is designed to meet ASHRAE 62.2-2010 or later, and ANSI / ACCA's 5 QI-2015 protocol, thereby improving the performance of HVAC equipment in new homes when compared to homes built to minimum code. However, these features alone cannot prevent all ventilation, indoor air quality, and HVAC problems, (e.g., those caused by a lack of maintenance by occupants). Therefore, this Checklist is not a guarantee of proper ventilation, indoor air quality, or HVAC performance.
32. Track A – HVAC Grading shall use ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310 including all Addenda and Normative Appendices, with new versions and Addenda implemented according to the schedule defined by the HCO that the home is being certified under.
33. For Track A, the Items in Section 5a are applicable to all unitary HVAC Systems including air conditioners and heat pumps up to 65 kBtuh and furnaces up to 125 kBtuh. All applicable systems shall comply with 5a.1 through 5a.3 for the home to be certified.
For Track B, the Items in Section 5b are applicable to split air conditioners, unitary air conditioners, air-source heat pumps, and water-source (i.e., geothermal) heat pumps up to 65 kBtuh with forced-air distribution systems (i.e., ducts) and to furnaces up to 225 kBtuh with forced-air distribution systems (i.e., ducts). All applicable systems shall comply with 5b.1 and 5b.2 for the home to be certified.



ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes

National Rater Field Checklist, Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2 (Rev. 13)

If, based on the selected Track, the Items in Section 5 are not applicable to any systems in the home, the Rater shall mark 'N/A'.

34. If the non-invasive procedure in ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310 is not permitted to be used during the final inspection of a home (i.e., due to the equipment type or to outdoor air temperatures that do not meet the requirements of the non-invasive method), then the home is permitted to be certified with a default refrigerant charge designation of Grade III. Note that in these circumstances, the weigh-in method procedure in ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310 may still be used to pursue a Grade I designation.
35. If installed equipment does not match the National HVAC Design Report, then prior to certification the Rater shall obtain written approval from the designer (e.g., email, updated National HVAC Design Report) confirming that the installed equipment meets the requirements of the National HVAC Design Report. In addition, if "N/A" was selected for Item 1.2 of the National Rater Design Review Checklist, then the Rater shall verify that all installed equipment is an exempted type per Footnote 14 of that Checklist or, if not an exempted type, shall re-review the National Rater Design Review Checklist to ensure compliance with all requirements (e.g., contractor credential, full completion of HVAC Design Report, HVAC design tolerances).

In cases where the condenser unit is installed after the time of inspection by the Rater, the HVAC manufacturer and model numbers on installed equipment can be documented through the use of photographs provided by the HVAC Contractor after installation is complete.
36. The Rater shall measure and record the external static pressure in the return-side and supply-side of the system using the contractor-provided test locations. However, at this time, the Rater need not assess whether these values are within a specific range to certify the home.
37. Kinks are to be avoided and are caused when ducts are bent across sharp corners such as framing members. Sharp bends are to be avoided and occur when the radius of the turn in the duct is less than one duct diameter. Compression is to be avoided and occurs when flexible ducts in unconditioned space are installed in cavities smaller than the outer duct diameter and ducts in conditioned space are installed in cavities smaller than inner duct diameter. Ducts shall not include coils or loops except to the extent needed for acoustical control.
38. Item 6.2 does not apply to ventilation ducts, exhaust ducts, or non-ducted systems. For an HVAC system with a multi-speed fan, the highest design fan speed shall be used when verifying this requirement. For an HVAC system with multiple zones, this requirement shall be verified with all zones calling for heating or cooling simultaneously; additional testing of individual zones is not required. When verifying this requirement, doors separating bedrooms from the main body of the house (e.g., a door between a bedroom and a hallway) shall be closed and doors to rooms that can only be entered from the bedroom (e.g., a closet, a bathroom) shall be open. As an alternative to the ± 3 Pa limit, a Rater-measured pressure differential ≥ -5 Pa and $\leq +5$ Pa is permitted to be used for bedrooms with a design airflow ≥ 150 CFM. The Rater-measured pressure shall be rounded to the nearest whole number to assess compliance.
39. Item 6.3 does not apply to ducts that are a part of local mechanical exhaust and exhaust-only dwelling unit mechanical ventilation systems. EPA recommends, but does not require, that all metal ductwork not encompassed by Section 6 (e.g., exhaust ducts, duct boots, ducts in conditioned space) also be insulated and that insulation be sealed to duct boots to prevent condensation.
40. Items 6.4 and 6.5 generally apply to the ducts of space heating, space cooling, and dwelling unit mechanical ventilation systems.

However, visual inspection is permitted in lieu of testing for a dwelling unit mechanical ventilation system not connected to the space heating or space cooling system, regardless of the number of dwelling units it serves. In such cases, a Rater shall visually verify that all seams and connections are sealed with mastic or metal tape and all duct boots are sealed to floor, wall, or ceiling using caulk, foam, or mastic tape.

For duct systems requiring testing, duct leakage shall be determined and documented by a Rater using ANSI / RESNET / ICC 380 including all Addenda and Normative Appendices, with new versions and Addenda implemented according to the schedule defined by the HCO that the home is being certified under. Leakage limits shall be assessed on a per-system, rather than per-home, basis.
41. For a duct system with three or more returns, the total Rater-measured duct leakage is permitted to be the greater of ≤ 6 CFM25 per 100 sq. ft. of CFA or ≤ 60 CFM25 at 'rough-in' or the greater of ≤ 12 CFM25 per 100 sq. ft. of CFA or ≤ 120 CFM25 at 'final'.
42. Note that compliance with Item 6.4.1 or 6.4.2 in conjunction with Section 4a of the National Rater Design Review Checklist automatically achieves Grade I total duct leakage per ANSI / RESNET / ACCA / ICC 310.
43. Cabinets (e.g., kitchen, bath, multimedia) or ducts that connect duct boots to toe-kick registers are not required to be in place during the 'rough-in' test.
44. Registers atop carpets are permitted to be removed and the face of the duct boot temporarily sealed during testing. In such cases, the Rater shall visually verify that the boot has been durably sealed to the subfloor (e.g., using duct mastic or caulk) to prevent leakage during normal operation.
45. Testing of duct leakage to the outdoors can be waived in accordance with the 2nd or 3rd alternative of ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301, Table 4.2.2 (1), footnote (w). Alternatively, testing of duct leakage to outdoors can be waived in accordance with Section 5.5.2 of ANSI / RESNET / ICC 380 if total duct leakage, at rough-in or final, is ≤ 4 CFM25 per 100 sq. ft. of conditioned floor area or 40 CFM25, whichever is larger. Guidance to assist partners with these alternatives, including modeling inputs, is available at <http://www.energystar.gov/newhomesguidance>.
46. As defined by ANSI / RESNET / ICC 301-2019, a Dwelling Unit Mechanical Ventilation System is a ventilation system consisting of powered ventilation equipment such as motor-driven fans and blowers and related mechanical components such as ducts, inlets, dampers, filters and associated control devices that provides dwelling-unit ventilation at a known or measured airflow rate.
47. Item 7.3 applies to any outdoor air inlet connected to a ducted return of the dwelling unit HVAC system, regardless of its intended purpose (e.g., for ventilation air, make-up air, combustion air). This Item does not apply to HVAC systems without a ducted return.
48. The Dwelling Unit Mechanical Ventilation System air flows and local exhaust air flows shall be determined and documented by a Rater using ANSI / RESNET / ICC 380 including all Addenda and Normative Appendices, with new versions and Addenda implemented according to the schedule defined by the HCO that the home is being certified under. Designers are permitted to provide multiple combinations of a design ventilation airflow rate, run-time per cycle, and cycle time. When multiple combinations are provided, the Rater shall first assess the run-time setting of the installed system and use that to determine the corresponding design ventilation rate. The Rater-measured ventilation rate must fall within the program-specified tolerance relative to that design ventilation rate.
49. For an attached dwelling unit, excluding units in dwellings (i.e., duplex) and townhomes, the override control is not required to be readily accessible to the occupant. However, in such cases, EPA recommends but does not require that the control be readily accessible to others (e.g., building maintenance staff) in lieu of the occupant.



ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes

National Rater Field Checklist, Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2 (Rev. 13)

50. For example, if an outdoor air inlet connected to a ducted return is used as a dedicated source of outdoor air for an exhaust ventilation system (e.g., bath fan), the outdoor airflow must be automatically restricted when the exhaust fan is not running and in the event of an override of the exhaust ventilation system.
51. When assessing the ventilation rate, the highest HVAC fan speed applicable to ventilation mode shall be used (e.g., if the inlet only opens when the HVAC is in 'fan-only' mode, then test in this mode). If the inlet has a motorized damper that only opens when the local mechanical kitchen exhaust is turned on, then testing is not required.

When required, the ventilation airflow through the inlet shall be measured and documented by a Rater using ANSI / RESNET / ICC 380 including all Addenda and Normative Appendices, with new versions and Addenda implemented according to the schedule defined by the HCO that the home is being certified under. As an alternative, measurement of the outdoor airflow can be waived if a Constant Airflow Regulating (CAR) damper with a manufacturer-specified maximum flow rate no higher than 15 CFM or 15% above the ventilation design value is installed on the inlet.
52. Dwelling Unit Mechanical Ventilation System fans shall be rated for sound at no less than the airflow rate in Item 2.3 of the National HVAC Design Report. Fans exempted from this requirement include HVAC air handler fans, remote-mounted fans, and intermittent fans rated ≥ 400 CFM. To be considered for this exemption, a remote-mounted fan must be mounted outside the habitable spaces, bathrooms, toilets, and hallways and there shall be ≥ 4 ft. ductwork between the fan and intake grill. Per ASHRAE 62.2-2010, habitable spaces are intended for continual human occupancy; such space generally includes areas used for living, sleeping, dining, and cooking but does not generally include bathrooms, toilets, hallways, storage areas, closets, or utility rooms.
53. Note that the 'fan-on' setting of a thermostat would not be an acceptable controller because it would continuously operate the HVAC fan.
54. Bathroom fans with a rated flow rate ≥ 500 CFM are exempted from the requirement to be ENERGY STAR certified.
55. Without proper maintenance, ventilation air inlet screens often become filled with debris. Therefore, EPA recommends, but does not require, that these ventilation air inlets be located so as to facilitate access and regular service by the occupant. Ventilation air inlets that are only visible via rooftop access are exempted from Item 7.7 and the Rater shall mark "N/A".
56. Two alternatives to the required 10 ft. distance are provided: 1) inlets providing outdoor air to a dwelling unit are permitted to be ≥ 5 ft. of stretched-string distance from outlets of both exhaust dwelling unit mechanical ventilation systems and local mechanical exhaust systems, and 2) the outlet and inlet of ERV's and HRV's may use a smaller distance if allowed by the manufacturer of the system. If the second alternative is used, the manufacturer's instructions shall be collected for documentation purposes.
57. Known contamination sources include, but are not limited to, stacks, vents, exhausts, and vehicles.
58. Continuous bathroom local mechanical exhaust fans shall be rated for sound at no less than the airflow rate in Item 8.2. Intermittent bathroom and both intermittent and continuous kitchen local mechanical exhaust fans are recommended, but not required, to be rated for sound at no less than the airflow rate in Items 8.1 and 8.2. Per ASHRAE 62.2-2010, an exhaust system is one or more fans that remove air from the building, causing outdoor air to enter by ventilation inlets or normal leakage paths through the building envelope (e.g., bath exhaust fans, range hoods, clothes dryers). Per ASHRAE 62.2-2010, a bathroom is any room containing a bathtub, shower, spa, or similar source of moisture.
59. An intermittent mechanical exhaust system, where provided, shall be designed to operate as needed by the occupant. Control devices shall not impede occupant control in intermittent systems.
60. Kitchen volume shall be determined by drawing the smallest possible rectangle on the floor plan that encompasses all cabinets, pantries, islands, peninsulas, ranges / ovens, and the kitchen exhaust fan, and multiplying by the average ceiling height for this area. In addition, the continuous kitchen exhaust rate shall be ≥ 25 CFM, per 2009 IRC Table M1507.3, regardless of the rate calculated using the kitchen volume. Cabinet volume shall be included in the kitchen volume.
61. Homes shall meet this Item. Alternatively, the prescriptive duct sizing requirements in Table 5.3 of ASHRAE 62.2-2010 or later are permitted to be used for kitchen exhaust fans based upon the rated airflow of the fan at 0.25 IWC. If the rated airflow is unknown, ≥ 6 in. smooth duct shall be used, with a rectangular to round duct transition as needed. Guidance to assist partners with these alternatives is available at <http://www.energystar.gov/newhomesguidance>. As an alternative to Item 8.1, homes are permitted to use a continuous kitchen exhaust rate of 25 CFM per 2009 IRC Table M1507.3, if they are either a) Phius or PHI certified, or b) provide both dwelling unit ventilation and local mechanical kitchen exhaust using a balanced system, and have a Rater-verified whole-building infiltration rate ≤ 1.0 ACH50 or ≤ 0.05 CFM50 per sq. ft. of Enclosure Area, and a Rater-verified dwelling unit compartmentalization rate ≤ 0.30 CFM50 per sq. ft. of Enclosure Area if multiple dwelling units are present in the building. 'Enclosure Area' is defined as the area of the surfaces that bound the volume being pressurized / depressurized during the test.
62. All intermittent kitchen exhaust fans must be capable of exhausting at least 100 CFM. In addition, if the fan is not part of a vented range hood or appliance-range hood combination (i.e., if the fan is not integrated with the range), then it must also be capable of exhausting ≥ 5 ACH, based on the kitchen volume.
63. Based upon ASHRAE 62.2-2010, ducted mechanical systems are those that supply air to an occupiable space with a total amount of supply ductwork exceeding 10 ft. in length and through a thermal conditioning component, except for evaporative coolers. Systems that do not meet this definition are exempt from this requirement. While filters are recommended for mini-split systems, HRV's and ERV's, these systems, ducted or not, typically do not have MERV-rated filters available for use and are, therefore, also exempted under this version of the requirements. EPA also recommends, but does not require, filtering air inlets to minimize outdoor particles entering the home. HVAC filters located in the attic shall be considered accessible to the occupant if either 1) drop-down stairs, a pull-down ladder, or door provide access to attic and a permanently installed walkway has been provided between the attic access location and the filter or 2) the filter location enables arm-length access from a portable ladder without the need to step into the attic and the height of the ceiling access panel or the bottom of the wall access panel where access is provided is ≤ 12 ft.
64. Sealing mechanisms comparable to a gasket are also permitted to be used. The filter media box (i.e., the component in the HVAC system that houses the filter) may be either site-fabricated by the installer or pre-fabricated by the manufacturer to meet this requirement. These requirements only apply when the filter is installed in a filter media box located in the HVAC system, not when the filter is installed flush with the return grill.



ENERGY STAR Single-Family New Homes National Rater Field Checklist, Version 3 / 3.1 / 3.2 (Rev. 13)

65. The pressure boundary is the primary enclosure boundary separating indoor and outdoor air. For example, a volume that has more leakage to outside than to conditioned space would be outside the pressure boundary.
66. Per the 2009 International Mechanical Code, a direct-vent appliance is one that is constructed and installed so that all air for combustion is derived from the outdoor atmosphere and all flue gases are discharged to the outside atmosphere; a mechanical draft system is a venting system designed to remove flue or vent gases by mechanical means consisting of an induced draft portion under non-positive static pressure or a forced draft portion under positive static pressure; and a natural draft system is a venting system designed to remove flue or vent gases under nonpositive static vent pressure entirely by natural draft.
67. This item only applies to furnaces, boilers, and water heaters located within the home's pressure boundary. Naturally drafted equipment is allowed within the home's pressure boundary in Climate Zones 1-3 if the Rater has followed ANSI / ACCA 12 QH-2014, Section 3.2.2, Appendix A Sections A2.2.6, A3 (Carbon Monoxide Test), A4 (Depressurization Test for the Combustion Appliance Zone), and verified that the equipment meets the limits defined within.⁸
68. This item only applies to fireplaces located within the home's pressure boundary. Naturally drafted fireplaces are allowed within the home's pressure boundary if the Rater has verified that the total net rated exhaust flow of the two largest exhaust fans (excluding summer cooling fans) is ≤ 15 CFM per 100 sq. ft. of occupiable space when at full capacity. If the net exhaust flow exceeds the allowable limit, it shall be reduced or compensating outdoor airflow provided. Per ASHRAE 62.2-2010, the term "net rated exhaust flow" is defined as flow through an exhaust fan minus the compensating outdoor airflow through any supply fan that is interlocked to the exhaust fan. Per ASHRAE 62.2-2010, the term "occupiable space" is defined as any enclosed space inside the pressure boundary and intended for human activities, including, but not limited to, all habitable spaces, toilets, closets, halls, storage and utility areas, and laundry areas. See Footnote 52 for the definition of "habitable spaces".
69. The minimum volume of combustion air required for safe operation by the manufacturer and / or code shall be met or exceeded. Also, in accordance with the National Fuel Gas Code, ANSI Z223.1 / NFPA54, unvented room heaters shall not be installed in bathrooms or bedrooms.
70. Alternatively, unvented combustion appliances other than cooking ranges or ovens are permitted to be located inside the home's pressure boundary if the Rater has followed ANSI/ACCA 12 QH-2014, Section 3.2.2, Appendix A Sections A2.2.6, A3, and A4, and verified the equipment meets the limits defined within.
71. Any Item that will be concealed by drywall (e.g., wall insulation) must be verified during the pre-drywall inspection. If drywall is installed prior to the inspection, then it must be entirely removed to fully verify all Items. It is not sufficient to remove only portions of drywall to inspect a subset of areas. Furthermore, it is not acceptable to complete a Sampled Rating on a home that has missed the pre-drywall inspection. Additional information is available in the [Technical Bulletin: Pre-Drywall Inspection Is Always Required](#).
72. Some Items can typically only be verified at a later stage of construction than when the pre-drywall inspection occurs (e.g., bath fan airflow). Any Item that has not been verified during the pre-drywall inspection must be verified prior to or during the final inspection.

This collection of information is approved by OMB under the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq. (OMB Control No. 2060-0586). Responses to this collection of information are voluntary. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The public reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to be 1 hour per response. Send comments on the Agency's need for this information, the accuracy of the provided burden estimates and any suggested methods for minimizing respondent burden including through the use of automated collection techniques to the Director, Regulatory Support Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2821T), 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20460. Include the OMB control number in any correspondence. Do not send the completed form to this address.