

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460



OFFICE OF
AIR AND RADIATION

January 15, 2015

Dear ENERGY STAR[®] Room Air Conditioner Brand Owner or Other Interested Party:

With this letter, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is pleased to provide the Final Draft, Version 4.0 ENERGY STAR Room Air Conditioner specification. EPA appreciates the time and effort stakeholders contributed to this specification development process. EPA anticipates that this specification will take effect on October 26, 2015.

Final Draft Highlights

The Final Draft reflects input received from stakeholders in response to the Framework document, Draft 1 specification and individual discussions with a range of stakeholders. The Final Draft maintains the proposed efficiency criteria, such that ENERGY STAR room air conditioners must be 10% more efficient than those meeting the minimum federal efficiency standards. Stakeholder comments and individual follow-up discussions informed EPA that the proposed levels are achievable in time for the 2016 cooling season through the implementation of one or more of the technology options outlined in Draft 1. Among the suite of options that enable greater efficiency, EPA encourages the adoption of alternative refrigerants in accordance with the Significant New Alternatives Policy (SNAP) program.

In general, stakeholders provided supportive comments regarding the inclusion of installation criteria as a means of providing additional energy savings and improving consumer comfort. EPA did receive concern regarding the cost and demonstrated savings associated with insulating cover requirement for through-the-wall (TTW) units. In response to these concerns, the Agency has amended the criteria to remove this requirement for TTW units and instead requires that their associated installation instructions recommend consumer use of an appropriately sized cover to seal and insulate. The Final Draft also provides additional clarification to the remaining installation criteria, as requested.

EPA received varied feedback regarding the proposed sound performance criteria which intended to harmonize with the EcoDesign regulations mandated by the European Union. Comments and additional conversations with manufacturers revealed that labs are not yet able to complete the proposed test and building the needed facilities is costly. Further, EPA has learned that there is not an industry agreed upon means of completing a lower burden test. As such, EPA has removed the sound performance criteria from the Final Draft specification. However, EPA remains very interested in ensuring ENERGY STAR room air conditioners do not trade sound performance for efficiency. Thus, EPA will monitor the market to further understand the relationship between sound performance and efficiency, and consumer satisfaction with ENERGY STAR room air conditioners. As needed, in the next revision, EPA will set requirements to guard against noise such as limits on attributes that contribute to noise (e.g., fan speed) or limits on sound levels. EPA strongly encourages manufacturers to consider impacts to sound performance as they seek to meet the ENERGY STAR efficiency levels, and to avoid significantly increasing fan speeds where possible, in the interest of maintaining a positive consumer experience.

The Final Draft includes optional connected criteria as proposed in Draft 1. DOE is planning to develop a test method to validate the demand response capabilities of room air conditioners.

Comment Submittal

Any comments on the Final Draft Version 4.0 should be submitted via email to appliances@energystar.gov no later than February 2, 2015. All comments will be posted to the ENERGY STAR Product Development website unless the submitter requests otherwise. EPA intends to finalize this specification in February 2015 with an effective date nine months later on October 26, 2015. This should provide ample time for design considerations for the summer 2016 cooling season. As with other product categories, room air conditioners will be eligible for early certification any time after the specification is final.

Please direct any specific questions to Melissa Fiffer, EPA, at fiffer.melissa@epa.gov, 202-343-9494, or Jessica Lyman, ICF International at jessica.lyman@icfi.com, 202-862-1557. Room air conditioner test method questions should be directed to Bryan Berringer, DOE, at Bryan.Berringer@ee.doe.gov or (202) 586-0371. Thank you for your continued support of the ENERGY STAR program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Fiffer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Melissa" being more prominent than the last name "Fiffer".

Melissa Fiffer, Product Manager
ENERGY STAR Appliances