

**Version Tracking Document for  
ENERGY STAR Certified Homes, Version 3.1 (Rev. 06)  
07/01/2015**

In the time since Revision 05 of the Version 3.1 ENERGY STAR Certified Homes program requirements were released, EPA has modified, clarified, and refined various aspects of the program documents, primarily in response to partner questions and comments. This document is a summary of these edits, organized by the program document containing the change. EPA has also posted the revised program documents, labeled Version 3.1 (Rev. 06), on its Web site at [www.energystar.gov/newhomesguidelines](http://www.energystar.gov/newhomesguidelines).

All revisions are categorized as a Change, Clarification, or Refinement. These are defined as follows:

**Change** – The addition, deletion, or modification of a program requirement. A change will typically result from a partner question or feedback indicating that EPA’s original intent is not being met or due to changes in relevant standards (e.g., ENERGY STAR labeled product requirements, NAECA standards, ICC codes). A change is the most significant type of edit for partners because it is likely to change the way that partners comply with the program.

**Clarification** – The clarification of a program requirement, typically resulting from a partner question indicating confusion or ambiguity. Clarifications are not intended to significantly change the scope of the program requirements, but rather to clarify the original intent of the requirement. A clarification is secondary in importance to a change; it should not significantly alter the way that most partners comply with the program.

**Refinement** – A minor revision, such as an improved choice of words, a grammatical correction, or a correction to a typographical error. A refinement is the least important type of edit; it should have no impact on the way that partners comply with the program.

## **National Program Requirements**

1. **Refinement** – All program documents: ‘guidelines’ changed to ‘requirements’

All references to program ‘guidelines’ have been revised to program ‘requirements’ to align with the current terminology of the ENERGY STAR program.

2. **Refinement** – Certifying Homes Section: Renamed to Eligibility Requirements

To better fit the content of the section, the Certifying Homes Section has been renamed to Eligibility Requirements Section.

3. **Refinement** - Certifying Homes Section: Regional program requirements moved to Exhibit 4

The second to last paragraph in the Certifying Homes Section, which includes a list of locations for which regional program requirements have been developed, has been moved to Exhibit 4 for improved clarity.

4. **Change** – Prescriptive Path Section, Performance Path Section, Exhibit 1, and Footnotes 8, 16 – 18, 20 – 22, and 24: Removal of Prescriptive Path

No homes reported to EPA since 2012 have used the Prescriptive Path for certification. Having two paths instead of one adds to the complexity of the program - unnecessarily so, if one of those two paths is never used. To simplify the program, the Prescriptive Path has been removed.

Specifically, homes with a permit date on or after 60 days after the release of Rev. 06 will only be permitted to use the Performance Path, which has been renamed the ENERGY STAR Certification Process. However, to minimize the disruption to partners who might have had Prescriptive Path projects in process at the time Revision 06 was released, homes with a permit date before 09/01/2015 will be permitted to use the modified Prescriptive Path allowance, available at [www.energystar.gov/v31prescriptivepath](http://www.energystar.gov/v31prescriptivepath).

To reflect this change and simplify the National Program Requirements document, the Prescriptive Path Section and Footnotes 8, 16 through 18, 20 through 22, and 24 have been removed. Additionally a new Footnote has been added to the National Program Requirements as follows:

“Prior to Rev. 06, homes were permitted to be certified using either a Prescriptive Path or a Performance Path. Homes with a permit date on or after 60 days after the release of Rev. 06 shall only use the Performance Path, which has been renamed the ENERGY STAR Certification Process. To minimize disruption to projects that are in process, homes with a permit date before 09/01/2015 are permitted to use a modified version of the Prescriptive Path in lieu of the Performance Path. For more information about this compliance option, visit: [www.energystar.gov/v31prescriptivepath](http://www.energystar.gov/v31prescriptivepath)”.

Finally, because the Prescriptive Path has been removed, Exhibit 1 is no longer a set of prescriptive measures to be installed in a home to be certified but rather a set of efficiency features used to determine the ENERGY STAR HERS Index Target. For this reason, Exhibit 1 has been renamed 'ENERGY STAR Reference Design Home' and a paragraph has been added to the beginning explaining this new intent as follows:

"The ENERGY STAR Reference Design Home is the set of efficiency features modeled to determine the ENERGY STAR HERS Index Target for each home pursuing certification. Therefore, while the features below are not mandatory, if they are not used then other measures will be needed to achieve the ENERGY STAR HERS Index Target. In addition, note that the Mandatory Requirements for All Certified homes, Exhibit 2, contain additional requirements such as total duct leakage limits, minimum allowed insulation levels, and minimum allowed fenestration performance. Therefore, EPA recommends that partners review the documents in Exhibit 2 prior to selecting measures."

Additionally, several items throughout Exhibit 1 have been reworded to convey this intent and any efficiency features that are not used to determine the ENERGY STAR HERS Index Target (e.g., ground-source heat pumps, skylights, total duct leakage) have been removed from Exhibit 1.

5. **Refinement – Partnership, Training, and Credentialing Requirements Section relocated**

For improved clarity, the Partnership, Training, and Credentialing Requirements Section has been relocated below the Certifying Homes Section.

6. **Refinement – Performance Path: Combine first paragraph with Step 1**

To streamline the text in the Performance Path section, the first paragraph of this section has been combined with Step 1 as follows:

"The certification process provides the flexibility to select a custom combination of measures for each home that is equivalent in performance to the minimum requirements of the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Home, Exhibit 1, as assessed through energy modeling. Use a RESNET-accredited Home Energy Rating software program to determine the ENERGY STAR HERS index Target, which is the highest numerical HERS Index value that each rated home may achieve to earn the ENERGY STAR."

7. **Refinement – Step 1 of Performance Path: Procedural details moved to Footnote**

The second sentence of this paragraph, which provides details on how to determine the ENERGY STAR HERS Index Target, has been relocated to a new Footnote and refined, as follows: "The software program shall automatically determine (i.e., without relying on a user-configured ENERGY STAR Reference Design) this target for each rated home by following the ENERGY STAR HERS Index Target Procedure, Version 3.1, available on EPA's website."

8. **Refinement – Performance Path and Footnote 9: Integration of cover page from Inspection Checklists**

As part of a larger effort to reduce the amount of paperwork required to certify a home, the cover page of the Inspection Checklists has been deleted and much of the content moved to the National Program Requirements. Because the Inspection Checklists are often printed for each home certified, eliminating the cover page will reduce the paperwork required for each home that is certified.

Specifically, the following paragraphs have been moved from the cover page of the Inspection Checklists to Step 4 of the Performance Path:

"The Rater is required to keep electronic or hard copies of the completed and signed Rater checklists and the HVAC Design Report.

The Rater must review all items on the Rater checklists. Raters are expected to use their experience and discretion to verify that the overall intent of each inspection checklist item has been met (i.e., identifying major defects that undermine the intent of the checklist item versus identifying minor defects that the Rater may deem acceptable).

In the event that a Rater finds an item that is inconsistent with the intent of the checklists, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR until the item is corrected. If correction of the item is not possible, the home cannot earn the ENERGY STAR. In the event that an item on a Rater checklist cannot be inspected by the Rater, the home also cannot earn the ENERGY STAR. The only exceptions to this rule are in the Thermal Enclosure System Section of the Rater Field Checklist, where the builder may assume responsibility for verifying a maximum of eight items. This option shall only be used at the discretion of the Rater. When exercised, the builder's responsibility will be formally acknowledged by the builder signing the checklist for the item(s) that they verified.

In the event that a Rater is not able to determine whether an item is consistent with the intent (e.g., an alternative method of meeting a checklist requirement has been proposed), then the Rater shall consult their Provider. If the Provider also cannot make this determination, then the Rater or Provider shall report the issue to EPA prior to project completion at: energystarhomes@energystar.gov and will typically receive an initial response within 5 business days. If EPA believes the current program requirements are sufficiently clear to determine whether the intent has been met, then this guidance will be provided to the partner and enforced beginning with the house in question. In contrast, if EPA believes the program requirements require revisions to make the intent clear, then this guidance will be provided to the partner but only enforced for homes permitted after a specified transition period after the release of the revised program requirements, typically 60 days in length.

This process will allow EPA to make formal policy decisions as partner questions arise and to disseminate these policy decisions through the periodic release of revised program documents to ensure consistent application of the program requirements.”

Additionally, the following language about sampling protocols has been moved from the cover page of the Inspection Checklists to Footnote 9:

“Raters who operate under a Sampling Provider are permitted to verify the Minimum Rated Features of the home and to verify any Checklist Item designated ‘Rater Verified’ using the RESNET-approved sampling protocol for homes outside California, and the CEC-approved sampling protocol for homes in CA. No parties other than Raters are permitted to use sampling. All other items shall be verified for each certified home. For example, no items on the HVAC Commissioning Checklist are permitted to be verified using a sampling protocol.”

9. **Refinement** – **Exhibit 1: References to certain ENERGY STAR Certified products removed**

Exhibit 1 defines the efficiency of, among other products, heat pumps and air conditioners that are configured in the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Home. These efficiencies are not changing, however, a new more stringent specification has been finalized for ENERGY STAR certified products of this type. Therefore, the phrase ‘ENERGY STAR Certified’ has been removed from references to these product types to avoid confusion.

10. **Refinement** – **Exhibit 2: Updated Terminology For Mandatory Requirements**

As part of a larger effort to improve the workflow required to certify a home, the inspection checklists required to certify a home have been, in part, rearranged and renamed to improve the workflow of the certification process. Exhibit 2 has been updated to reflect the revised program documents and who is responsible for completing each of them, as follows:

Party Responsible	Mandatory Requirements
<b>Rater</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of Rater Design Review Checklist</li> <li>• Completion of Rater Field Checklist</li> </ul>
<b>HVAC System Designer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of HVAC Design Report</li> </ul>
<b>HVAC Installing Contractor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of HVAC Commissioning Checklist</li> </ul>
<b>Builder</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of Water Management System Builder Requirements</li> </ul>

11. **Refinement** – **Footnotes 10, 11, 12, 13, 19, and 23: Removed**

Because the information in these Footnotes is already contained in the Inspection Checklists, or is already part of a standard HERS rating, they have been deleted to streamline this document.

**HERS Index Target Procedure for National Program Requirements**

12. **Clarification** – **Exhibit 2: Configuration of thermal boundary in basements**

To clarify how to configure the location of the foundation insulation in the ENERGY STAR Reference Design home for a home with a basement, a Footnote has been added to the Insulation sub-section of the Foundation Section and the Floors Over Unconditioned Spaces Section of Exhibit 2 as follows:

“If software allows the user to specify the thermal boundary location independent of the conditioned space boundary in the basement of the rated home, then the thermal boundary of the ENERGY STAR Reference Design shall be aligned with this boundary. For example, if the thermal boundary is located at the walls, then the wall insulation shall be configured as if it was a conditioned basement. If the thermal boundary is located at the floor above the basement, then the floor insulation shall be configured as if it was a floor over an unconditioned space.”

13. **Clarification** – Exhibit 2: Heating & cooling equipment configuration when Rated Home has neither

To clarify how to configure the heating equipment efficiency in the ENERGY STAR Reference Design for Rated homes without heating equipment, a new Footnote has been added to the System Type subsection of the Heating Systems Section of Exhibit 2 as follows:

“For a Rated Home without a heating system, the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Home shall be configured with a 78% AFUE gas furnace system, unless the Rated home has no access to natural gas or fossil fuel delivery. In such cases, the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Home shall be configured with a 7.7 HSPF air-source heat pump.”

To clarify how to configure the cooling equipment efficiency in the ENERGY STAR Reference Design for rated homes without cooling equipment, a new Footnote has been added to the System Type subsection of the Cooling Systems Section of Exhibit 2 as follows:

“For a Rated Home without a cooling system, the ENERGY STAR Reference Design Home shall be configured with a 13 SEER electric air conditioner.”

14. **Change** – Thermal Distribution Systems Section: Duct location for multifamily dwelling units

To eliminate any ambiguity surrounding the duct location configuration in the reference design for multifamily dwelling units, the ‘Supply and Return Duct Locations:’ sub-header in the Thermal Distribution Systems Section has been modified to read “Supply and Return Duct Locations shall be configured according to the table below or, if Rated home does not meet any of the conditions below (e.g., multifamily dwelling unit with conditioned unit below), then duct locations shall be configured to be 100% in conditioned space.”

15. **Change** – Exhibit 2: Quantity of ceiling fans

To clarify that the quantity of ceiling fans in the ENERGY STAR Reference Design home shall equal the number of bedrooms plus one when ceiling fans are present in the Rated home, and shall otherwise be zero, the Ceiling Fan row of the Lighting, Appliances, & Internal Gains Section of Exhibit 2 has been revised as follows:

“Ceiling Fan: 122 CFM per Watt; Quantity = Number of bedrooms + 1 when ceiling fans present in the Rated Home; otherwise Quantity = 0”