

COVID 19 April 15, 2020 Webinar FAQ

Can the Remote QA protocol be used for RFI Graded Evaluations? If not, is there a plan in place for these?

Yes, RESNET has announced this temporary policy change and the website has been updated accordingly.

<https://www.resnet.us/articles/covid-19-emergency-procedures-for-proctoring-resnet-tests-2/>

Using remote online QA, is QA Designee still required to maintain in their files the list of photos and materials in RESNET list?

Yes, the QAD should maintain documentation for remote field QA in much the same way as their live visits. Screenshots and/or photos taken by the tester would replace the field photos that are normally taken by the QAD during on-site visits. A video recording would also be allowed as an alternative or supplement to photos, but video recording is not required except when using the "offline option."

SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19)Disease spread through both direct (droplet and person-to-person) as well as indirect contact supporting the use of airborne isolation precautions. Recent literature investigating human expired aerosol indicates that a significant fraction of human expired aerosol is less than 10 µm in diameter across all types of activity (e.g. breathing, talking, and coughing;) and that upper respiratory illness increases production of aerosol particles (less than 10 µm;). Taken together these results suggest that virus expelled from infected individuals, including from those who are only mildly ill, may be transported by aerosol processes in their local environment, potentially even in the absence of cough or aerosol generating procedures makes running blower door and duct-blower testing dangerous even when social distancing is implemented because virus can be resuspended especially in multifamily projects. How do we protect a rater and make a final inspection, can we skip the blower door duct blower diagnostics?

Stay-at-home and shelter-in-place orders (along with the exemptions) vary by municipality. For HERS professionals who are allowed to be in homes, the risk posed by blower door and duct testing can be informed by new research into the airborne transmission of the virus. This research is evolving quickly and there are more questions than definitive answers at this time. In the interest of public safety, RESNET has proposed an Interim Amendment for temporary allowance of blower door, duct and ventilation default values.

Is there any extension to field calibration check requirements for testing equipment?

At this time, RESNET has not adopted any temporary policy regarding field calibration. This topic may be revisited in the future. Providers should communicate any non-compliance, calibration or otherwise, to the RESNET QA team via the COVID19info@resnet.us email address. The RESNET QA team will work with Providers individually to create an action plan.

There should be an offline option for raters with clear instructions. Many buildings, while in an urban area, can have poor reception in lower levels of buildings.

An offline option for remote inspections was given some consideration. Ultimately, the decision to leave this option out comes down to the need for specific training and expertise to guide the inspection process (dialogue is needed to help guide the builder rep on where to point the camera, especially when spotting deficiencies or unexpected features, etc.). Simple rated features and model numbers would be easy enough, but there are other features such as insulation install and air sealing that require the "trained eye" of a RESNET certified pro.

Have a problem with the ACH50 defaults. For CZ 5, two "average" rates are > 3.5 ACH. The ECC Code limit is 3.0 ... problem! I work with a builder who frequently scores between 1.5 to 2.0 ACH. Couldn't we use his proven record erring to the higher number?

RESNET has proposed a second option to the Climate Zone defaults that would allow a Provider to calculate builder-specific defaults based on their past performance.

What if you have an in process ACH50 for a home? Taken pre-drywall, or after AeroBarrier that is much lower than the default.

At this time, the proposed Interim Amendment does not address infiltration measurements taken by non-RESNET certified contractors.

Should we use those defaults for MF projects as well? And any sampling specific guidance?

RESNET's initial data analysis did look at attached dwellings separately from detached. But ultimately the Climate Zone defaults that are proposed are for all housing types- this was done in the interest of time and simplicity, but we acknowledge that is at the expense of greater accuracy. For multifamily projects with recent testing history, the builder-specific defaults are likely the better choice. Keep in mind that neither default option would be mandatory.

On slide 38 do you mean CFM50 or CFM25?

The units for duct LTO should be CFM25 (normalized to CFM25/sf) and units for infiltration should be CFM50 (normalized to ACH50).

Have you had any conversations with PHIUS, USGBC, etc. about what they may or may not accept in terms of default values?

RESNET has monitored the communications from other organizations on their remote inspection policies and has only worked directly with the ENERGY STAR Homes program. Questions on whether specific local or national programs will recognize RESNET's temporary policies should be directed to those program representatives.

Any info on whether ENERGY STAR will accept these defaults and any info about default value for duct total leakage test for ENERGY STAR Certification?

ENERGY STAR has announced a remote inspection policy that is in alignment with RESNET's remote inspection policies. However, the ENERGY STAR program announced a determination not to use the RESNET defaults in the Interim Amendment.

You might get to this but if we choose to use the defaults. Do we have to use climate zone for both blower door & ducts or can we choose to use climate zone for one and builder specific for another?

As proposed, the Interim Amendment does not limit a Provider to one option or the other.

The proposed infiltration value fails the code requirement of 3 ACH in Massachusetts.

With so many jurisdictions across the U.S. adopting different versions of the IECC and amending the requirements, there was no "one size fits all" method that would make sense for all circumstances. In the end, RESNET opted to base the defaults on actual test data rather than tie them to code. We acknowledge that in many cases, the defaults we are proposing will not pass the most stringent code requirements without some variance. RESNET has proposed a second option to the Climate Zone defaults that would allow a Provider to calculate builder-specific defaults based on their past performance.

Please recognize that Providers requiring testing are NOT requiring testing in unsafe conditions. Today's webinar seems to present this as a binary situation where a Rater must test OR use defaults. We contend that testing can be delayed until a safe time, and Ratings should not be confirmed until testing is completed. That is the policy we are implementing and I'd like that recognized when these discussions are being held.

The temporary option of using default leakage values is not mandatory, and it is not the only option to immediate on-site testing. Individual HERS Providers, HERS Rating companies, utility programs, code jurisdictions, and above-code programs may or may not wish to implement this alternative procedure. Providers can choose to deploy any one of many strategies that would limit the HERS Rater or Rating Field Inspector (RFI) to exposure at a construction site, including delaying testing until a safer time and not confirming those ratings until after the testing is completed.

Can full photo documentation be used instead of recorded video? What is the added value of having a recording? Think out loud? This is not a (BPI field) exam and the Raters we are dealing with are significantly experienced.

Assuming this question is related to Remote Field QA, the video requirement is intended to more fully capture the full observation that a QAD would make if they could be in the field, which includes a full house tour (not just the items a rater chooses to take photos of), the test conditions and house setup. Without that, the exercise is just essentially a file QA review. The 'think out loud' instruction is really just for the QAD to be able to pick up more info that may not be visible or obvious in the 'central vision' of the video. QADs are not required to save or store a recorded video; they can choose to shoot screenshots or ask raters/RFIs for added photo documentation as needed.

But can the testing data be exported en masse?

Testing data will be uploaded to the RESNET Registry from the rating software like usual. There is bulk upload functionality in the rating software.

Why are you using cfm25 per SF? Shouldn't it be cfm50 per SF?

LTO duct testing defaults will use cfm25/sf and air infiltration defaults will use ACH50

120 days works great for high volume builders, but what do you do about smaller volume builders who don't build a house every 120 days?

Amendment 48i specifies 120 days and additional guidance has been given in the protocols for calculating builder-specific defaults. This could be reconsidered at a later time using the interim amendment process.

Can we get guidance on what duct pressure we should use when determining ventilation air flow from HVI?

This is addressed in the protocol document as well as on this page <https://www.resnet.us/articles/new-actions-by-resnet-in-meeting-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

Can we use slightly worse defaults if using sampling?

This is addressed in the protocol document. https://www.resnet.us/wp-content/uploads/RESNET-Temporary-Default-Test-Protocols_4-27-20.pdf