



Setting the **Standards** for
Home Energy Efficiency

Protocols for RESNET Remote QA Field Observations of Rating Provider Field QA Reviews

May 26, 2020

This document describes a process for RESNET QA Staff members to remotely monitor Provider Field QA Activities in lieu of tradition in-person visits.

During the National Emergency caused by COVID-19, RESNET has urged that Rating Providers and HERS Rating Companies restrict to the extent possible their certified RESNET HERS Raters and RFIs going into the field to inspect and test homes. However, RESNET recognizes that in many areas rating services (as part of Residential Construction) have been deemed essential infrastructure, creating the need for ongoing Quality Assurance activities and subsequent oversight by RESNET.

For the safety of Staff and the general public during this national emergency, RESNET has adopted temporary policy limiting travel.

General Process

RESNET staff will plan to join you via this Remote QA Field Observations process for no more than a half-day while you are in the field. This should give us plenty of time to complete the actual QA field observations and discuss interpretations, answer your questions, and share best practices or challenges.

In general, we want to prioritize this QA Field Observation with you as the Primary QAD. Whether your typical practice is to have the rater/RFI in the home during your field QA or to do blind QA without the rater/RFI, please keep that practice the same (unless you have changed your field QA review process during the COVID pandemic). We would like to observe as good a representation as possible of how you usually do QA. I realize my presence via phone or computer and this entire Remote QA Field Observations visit is going to make things unusual, and I will strive to minimize interruption of your process.

You likely have other members of your QA team who would benefit from watching or hearing what we discuss. We will have a follow up phone call shortly after the trip to discuss my observations and revisit any interpretation questions that could not be answered in the field. As there will be less time constraints during the follow up phone call than during the field observation, that call would be a perfect time to bring in the rest of your QA team and give everyone an opportunity to ask questions.

Minimum Requirements

All minimum rated features that are visible at the time of Remote QA Field Observations must be captured in a way sufficient for the RESNET QA Staff member to evaluate the feature (e.g. need to see model numbers, insulation type and depth, etc.). If the Rater/RFI is not present, the QAD should have their own testing equipment.

The following equipment will be required, at a minimum, to complete Remote QA Field Observations:

- Blower door, Duct Tester, digital manometer, flow hood (OR approved alternative for measuring ventilation)
- Lighting to illuminate even the darkest corners
- Computer hardware device (e.g. cell phone, tablet, laptop, etc.) must be capable of live video streaming or recording
- Camera (either phone, computer notebook or other camera)
- Any necessary apps must be loaded on the hardware device (see Appendix A for some recommended applications). App should allow for screenshots and/or recording of Remote QA Field Observations
- Minimum of 3G cellular or wireless internet connection
- Ladder
- Tape measure

General Preparations & Best Practices

1. Once you know where and when we will be doing our Remote QA Field Observations visit, please send the RESNET Staff member the date and time, the site address, your cell phone number, and any necessary log in information.
2. If the Rater/RFI has sent you documentation for the home that we will visit, please send the documentation to support the minimum rated features (including any data previously collected in the field for the dwelling, energy model file, drawings/plans, take-offs from plans, field sketches, photos, EnergyGuide appliance labels, AHRI certificates for HVAC equipment, NFRC or spec sheets for windows, etc.). You can use Dropbox, Google Drive or any file sharing service that you prefer.
3. To confirm that all connections and equipment are working properly, the QAD and RESNET Staff member should complete a test of remote viewing equipment, software and/or apps to make sure that all is working properly before the scheduled session in the Field.
4. The RESNET QA Staff member shall provide the *Protocols for RESNET Remote QA Field Observations of Rating Provider Field QA Reviews* as outlined in this document to the QAD ahead of time and answer any questions on the process to be followed.
5. RESNET's marketing staff requests a photo to be posted on social media. We will not disclose the builder or the home address; we just want to show folks that we are doing these Remote QA Field Observations. Please let us know if we can take a photo (screenshot) for this purpose during my visit.

Preparation by the QAD

1. Make certain all hardware is fully charged with a minimum of 3 hours of run time. Have extra batteries, external power supply, and/or charging cords.
2. Have the required tools (see above minimum requirements) and make certain that they are operable (including available power or a generator) and calibrated per RESNET Standards, as applicable.
3. Test the connectivity and signal strength at the project site that will be required to support live streaming video.

4. Coordinate with other trade partners/contractors who may be sharing the jobsite in order to maintain social distancing and reduce noise and distractions.
5. Follow any application-specific instructions for video conferencing tools.

RESNET Remote QA Field Observations: Process Description

1. The QAD shall begin Remote QA Field Observations from the outside with an elevation view (typically front) of the building. The address must be visible in the initial view. If street number is too small to see from a full elevation view, then the QAD shall walk/zoom up to the street number sign until clearly visible to the RESNET Staff member. If there is no street number signage installed on the house, then a building permit, lot/block signage, or other identification posted on-site shall be captured with the video camera to establish that the QAD is at the correct location. For multifamily dwellings, the video shall capture the approach from the elevation view up to the dwelling unit that is being inspected.
2. The RESNET Staff member shall ensure that all data for minimum rated features and, if applicable, ENERGY STAR Program requirements are subject to visual inspection. Supporting documentation such as plans, energy simulation file, and photos may be necessary to confirm some items. If not available beforehand, the RESNET Staff member shall collect the appropriate documentation after the conclusion of the Remote QA Field Observations.
3. The QAD shall:
 - a. Demonstrate and describe, in as much detail as possible, the location within the dwelling and the specific rated features being shown on video.
 - b. "Think out loud" and communicate what it is they are seeing and doing.
 - c. Complete inspection forms to record verified items following their normal data collection process for in-person Field QA Reviews.
4. If at any point the RESNET Staff member believes that the Remote QA Field Observations process is not allowing them to completely and satisfactorily assess the minimum rated features, they may request that another Remote QA Field Observations visit be scheduled, including making that visit in-person rather than Remote.

Cancellation/Reschedule

1. Both the QAD and the RESNET Staff member have the right and responsibility to call out any identified health and safety concerns that could put the QAD at risk. In the event that such risks are present in the tested dwelling, appropriate safety protocol shall be followed and when necessary, the Remote QA Field Observations event shall be rescheduled.
2. Circumstances may arise that prevent the RESNET Staff member from being able to complete a full review of the available minimum rated features. Loss of connectivity, battery failure, and poor sound/visual quality are just a few examples. The RESNET Staff member may, at their discretion, cancel the Remote QA Field Observations event and require supplemental Remote QA Field Observations when sufficient verification of minimum rated features is not possible.

Appendix A

Useful Links*

1. [Google Duo](#)
2. FaceTime
3. [Facebook Messenger](#)
4. Zoom
5. [Skype](#)
6. SightCall.com

*Note, RESNET does not endorse any specific video conferencing platform. This is a quickly evolving and competitive marketplace. The above list is not intended to be exclusive and newer applications may exist that meet the protocol requirements.