



Setting the **Standards** for  
**Home Energy Efficiency**

## **Temporary RESNET Protocols for Remote Field Inspections During the COVID Pandemic**

April 3, 2020

***During the National Emergency caused by COVID-19 and concern over public health, RESNET is urging 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. The decision of whether the HERS professionals go on a job site rests with the Provider/Rating Company.***

***For the safety of individuals and for the viability of the HERS Industry during this national emergency, RESNET has adopted temporary emergency policy allowing remote inspection by HERS Raters and RFIs.***

***IMPORTANT: The temporary policy is not mandatory. Individual Providers, utility programs, code jurisdictions, and above-code programs may or may not wish to implement these alternative inspection procedures. This interim policy is allowed for a period of 90 days beginning on March 31, 2020 but may be revisited by RESNET as necessary in light of developments with the COVID-19 pandemic.***

***The procedures described in this document address visual inspections only. Testing alternatives for infiltration, duct leakage, and ventilation air flow rates will be addressed separately via an Interim Amendment to the Mortgage Industry National Home Energy Rating System Standards (MINHERS).***

### **Minimum Requirements**

All minimum rated features that are visible at the time of Remote Field Inspection must be captured in a way sufficient for the Rater/RFI to evaluate the feature (e.g. need to see model numbers, insulation type and depth, etc.). The term "Builder representative" as used in this document, means the individual authorized by the builder to be in the dwelling using a mobile device to facilitate the Remote Field Inspection. The Builder representative is not required to have RESNET credentials or testing equipment.

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

- 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
- Any necessary apps must be loaded on the hardware device (see Appendix A for recommended applications). App should allow for screenshots and/or

recording of Remote Field Inspection

- Minimum of 3G cellular or wireless internet connection
- Ladder
- Tape measure

### **General Preparations & Best Practices**

1. Whenever possible, the Rater/RFI shall review the Rating Data Files that are available for the dwelling being inspected including any data previously collected in the field for the dwelling; if available, data from architectural drawings and specifications.
2. To confirm that all connections and equipment are working properly, the Rater/RFI and Builder representative 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.
3. The Rater/RFI shall provide the Remote Field Inspection Protocols as outlined in this document to the Builder representative ahead of time and answer any questions on the process to be followed.

### **Preparation by the Builder Representative**

1. Make certain all hardware is fully charged with 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).
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 reduce noise and distractions
5. Follow any application-specific instructions for recommended video conferencing tools from Appendix A of this document.

### **Remote Field Inspection Process**

1. The Builder representative shall begin Remote Field Inspection 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 Builder representative shall walk/zoom up to the street number sign until clearly visible to the Rater/RFI. 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 Builder representative is at the correct location. For multifamily dwellings, the video shall capture the approach from the respective elevation view up to the dwelling unit that is being inspected.
2. The Rater/RFI 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, and photos may be necessary to confirm some items. If not available beforehand, the Rater/RFI shall collect the appropriate documentation at the conclusion of the Remote inspection.
3. The Builder representative 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.
4. The Rater/RFI shall complete inspection forms to record verified items following their normal data collection process for in-person inspections.
5. If at any point the Rater/RFI believes that the Remote Field Inspection process is not allowing them to completely and satisfactorily assess the minimum rated features, they may request that another Remote Field Inspection be scheduled, including making that visit in-person rather than Remote.

### **Supporting Documentation and Reporting**

1. The Rater/RFI shall comply with documentation of minimum rated features as required by RESNET Standards, including the photo requirements set forth in Appendix B of ANSI-301-2014/2019. Photo documentation requirements can be met in three ways:
  - a. Video Recording of the Remote Field Inspection
  - b. Screenshot taken by the Rater/RFI during the Remote Field Inspection
  - c. Photos taken by the Builder Rep supplementing the Remote Field Inspection
2. All HERS Ratings that are completed using Remote Field Inspections shall be reported by the Rater/RFI to the RESNET-Accredited Rating Provider for inclusion in the Annual QA Reporting to RESNET.
3. The Rater/RFI shall indicate in the revised *RESNET COVID-19 REMOTE INSPECTION HOME ENERGY RATING Standard Disclosure Form* that the HERS rating inspection was completed under the *Temporary RESNET Protocols for Remote Field Inspections During the COVID Pandemic*. The revised disclosure form can be downloaded at [RESNET COVID-19 REMOTE INSPECTION HOME ENERGY RATING Standard Disclosure Form](#)

The HERS Provider should track the following for homes that were rated under this protocol:

- The address of the home that was rated under the emergency protocol
- The date that the rating took place
- The name of the HERS Rater/RFI that was responsible for the rating.

HERS Providers shall include the above data as part of their 2020 Annual QA Report submission.

### **Cancellation/Reschedule**

1. Both the Rater/RFI and the Builder representative have the right and responsibility to call out any identified health and safety concerns that could put the Builder representative at risk. If such risks are present in the tested dwelling, appropriate safety protocol shall be followed and when necessary, the Remote Field Inspection event shall be rescheduled.
2. Circumstances may arise that prevent the Rater/RFI 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 Rater/RFI may, at their discretion, cancel the Remote Field Inspection event and

require supplemental Remote Field Inspection(s) 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.