

**RESNET  
ENERGY STAR HOMES PROGRAM  
ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES FOR  
BUILDER OPTION PACKAGE  
PROVIDERS**

# RESNET

## NATIONAL BUILDER OPTION PACKAGE PROVIDER ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

### 1.0 Background

The following procedures for accrediting Building Option Package (BOP) providers have been developed and adopted by the Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET). BOPs were developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), can be used by builders to demonstrate compliance to the ENERGY STAR® Homes Program standard. The BOPs have been demonstrated to meet the 86 Home Energy Rating score threshold under “worse case” scenarios and involve the same building performance inspection as a home energy rating.

The accreditation criteria is based upon the Mortgage Industry National Home Energy Rating System Accreditation Standard that was developed by a joint National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO)/RESNET Accreditation Task Force. The task force was comprised of representatives of state energy offices and operating statewide home energy rating programs.

### 2.0 Definitions

*Building Option Package (BOP)* - Developed by EPA, a prescriptive option that builders can use to demonstrate compliance to the ENERGY STAR® Homes Program standard. The BOPs have been demonstrated to meet the ENERGY STAR Homes performance guidelines under “worse case” scenarios and involve the same building performance inspection as a home energy rating.

*BOP Inspector* - A person trained to inspect and evaluate the energy features of a home and conduct necessary diagnostic testing and collect all of the data necessary to confirm that the home complies with the BOP. The training shall be conducted by a RESNET accredited rater training provider.

*BOP Provider* - A entity accredited by RESNET that oversees the BOP inspectors and issues the BOP certification that the home meets the Energy Star guidelines.

### 3.0 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that accurate and consistent BOPs are implemented by accredited BOP providers nationwide to increase the credibility of BOPs and the ENERGY STAR Homes program. It is also recognized that a periodic review of the accreditation procedure is necessary to: (1) incorporate technological innovations;

(2) assess the degree to which the procedure meets the needs of the housing industry; and

#### **4.0 Scope**

- 4.A. This document sets out the procedures for the accreditation of BOP providers so their results will be acceptable to the housing industry and consumers.
- 4.B. There may be instances in which state laws or regulations will have additional requirements to those specified in this document.

#### **5.0 Accreditation Criteria**

A BOP provider must specifically meet the following minimum standards:

##### **5.A. Minimum BOP Inspector Training Standards:**

A BOP provider must provide for BOP inspector certification by requiring inspectors to successfully complete a RESNET accredited home energy rater training courses and to demonstrate competence in completing BOP performance inspections in the field. The following elements must be included in its BOP inspector training:

1. Basics of building science
2. Thermal resistance of insulating materials
3. Space heating/cooling equipment efficiency
4. Blower door testing procedures
5. Duct leakage and testing procedures
6. Determining the efficiency of windows
7. Basic principles of BOPs
8. BOP provider's policies and procedures for inspectors
9. Quality assurance procedures

##### **5.B. Certification Standards -- Certification and recertification of BOP inspectors shall be through a RESNET accredited home energy rater training provider, which shall include the following provisions:**

1. Initial classroom and/or field training.
2. Performance evaluation of ability to perform accurate BOP inspections including passing the national RESNET test.
3. Continuing Education - 12 hours of education and training approved by the BOP provider during the three years of certification.
4. Recertification of BOP inspectors no less than every three years

##### **5.C. Minimum Standards For BOP Provider's Operation Policies and Procedures must be written and provide for the following:**

1. Field inspection of all homes for verifying technical specifications.

2. Blower Door Test completed on all homes claiming credit for reduced air infiltration lower than the default value.
3. Duct testing completed on all homes claiming credit for reduced air distribution system leakage lower than the default value.
4. Written BOP inspector discipline procedures that includes progressive discipline involving Probation - Suspension - Termination
5. Written inspector quality control process that at a minimum contains the following provisions
  - a. Quality Assurance Designee
    - 1.) A BOP Provider shall designate an officer, employee, or contractor to be responsible for quality assurance within the organization. The responsibilities of the designee shall include:
      - a.) Maintenance of quality assurance files
      - b.) Review of ratings by inspector trainees and during the probationary period
      - c. Monitoring of BOP inspections by certified inspectors
    - 2.) The designated officer, employee, or contractor responsible for quality assurance shall demonstrate sufficient experience with the BOP inspection knowledge base and skills to review the work of trainees and certified raters. Sufficient experience shall be demonstrated by either of the following:
      - a.) Certification as a Rater Trainer
      - b.) Passing the RESNET Quality Assurance Designee Test
    - 3.) Proof of qualification shall be submitted with an application for accreditation.
    - 4.) If the quality assurance designee leaves the home energy rating system, the provider shall have sixty (60) calendar days to notify RESNET of the new designated officer or employee, or be subject to suspension of the accreditation under the provisions of Chapter One, Section 9, Suspension and Revocation of Accreditation.
  - b. Written rater quality control process that includes at a minimum the following:
    - 1.) The provider's quality assurance designee shall be responsible for the internal review of BOP inspections submitted by its inspectors, including:
      - a.) Review of BOP inspections conducted during the inspectors' probation period - Prior to certifying an inspector candidate the provider shall review at least 5 probationary BOP inspections performed by the inspector candidate within 12 months of training.

- 2.) Review of BOP inspection data files – For each BOP inspector, the provider’s quality assurance designee shall annually evaluate a minimum of 10% of each inspector’s inspection data files. The provider shall resolve any problems detected during these reviews. Excessive problems will trigger field monitoring of the BOP inspector.
  - 3.) Field Monitored BOP inspections - For each BOP inspector, the provider’s quality assurance designee shall be responsible for an annual evaluation of the greater of one home or one percent of the inspector's annual total of homes for which BOP inspections were provided. The provider’s quality assurance designee shall ensure that a BOP inspection is independently repeated to determine whether the inspection and/or diagnostic testing was accurately completed by the inspector, and determine whether information was completely collected and reported.
- c. BOP Inspection Recordkeeping – Providers and/or their certified BOP inspectors shall maintain records for each BOP inspection.
- 1.) The quality assurance record for each home shall contain at a minimum the electronic copy of the inspection file.
  - 2.) The record for each inspection shall be maintained for a minimum of three years.
- d. BOP Inspector Registry
- 1.) The provider shall maintain a registry of all their certified BOP inspectors. The provider will also keep on file the names and contact information for all, including company name, mailing address, voice phone number, fax number, and email address. Upon request the provider shall provide to RESNET its registry of certified raters.
- e. Complaint Response System
- 1.) Each provider shall have a system for receiving complaints. The provider shall respond to and resolve complaints related to BOP inspections and field verification and diagnostic testing services and reports. Providers shall ensure that inspectors inform purchasers and recipients of ratings and field verifications about the complaint system. Each provider shall retain records of complaints received and responses to complaints for a minimum of three years after the date of the complaint.
- f. RESNET Quality Assurance Review of Accredited Providers
- 1.) RESNET shall randomly select a limited number of accredited providers annually and conduct a review of their files. The RESNET Board of Directors shall determine the

number of providers that shall be reviewed on an annual basis and who will provide the quality assurance review. An accredited rating provider may have the right to challenge the quality assurance reviewer for cause.

- a.) Records which may be reviewed include:
  - i. BOP inspection files
  - ii. BOP inspection quality assurance records
  - iii. Complaint files
  - iv. BOP inspector agreements
  - v. BOP inspector registry
  - vi. Disclosure files
- b.) Significant inconsistencies or errors in the files reviewed may result in a field review

- 6. Knowledge of other EPA methods for labeling a home as ENERGY STAR.
- 7. Written conflict of interest provisions that prohibit undisclosed conflicts of interest but allow waiver with advanced disclosure. The “Home Energy Rating Standard Disclosure” form adopted by the RESNET Board of Directors shall be completed for each home that receives a BOP inspection and shall be provided to the rating client and made available to the home owner/buyer. Each form shall include, at a minimum, the name of the community/ subdivision and city and state where the home is located. Each form shall accurately reflect the proper disclosure for the home that it is rated (i.e. it should reflect the BOP inspector’s involvement with the home at the time the final ENERGY STAR certificate is issued). For the purposes of completing this Disclosure, “Rater’s employer” is defined as including any affiliate entities. Recognizing that a number of different relationships may occur between the inspector or the inspector’s employer and the rating client and/or homeowner and/or the marketplace in general, the BOP Provider shall ensure that all disclosures are adequately addressed by the Provider’s quality assurance plan, in accordance with the relevant Quality Assurance provisions of the Standards.

5.D. Technical Requirements for BOPs

- 1. The BOP provider can only use BOPs approved by the EPA ENERGY STAR Homes Program.

**6.0 Accreditation Process**

- 6.A. National BOP provider accreditation will be through the Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) and recognized by the EPA ENERGY STAR Home Program.
- 6.B. BOP providers must meet the accreditation criteria listed above.

6.C. The Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) will maintain the database of accredited BOP providers and will post it on its Internet web site found at <http://www.natresnet.org>.

6.D. Confidentiality of Information

Any BOP provider submitting the required application information and desiring to have certain information treated as confidential in order to limit disclosure shall, at the time of submission, attach a statement specifying the proprietary information and requesting confidentiality.

6.E. Review and Notification

6.E.1 Within 15 days of receipt of the completed application, RESNET will do an initial review of the application and provisional BOP Provider accreditation can be granted to applicants during the remaining application review process. This provisional accreditation is valid during the period of application review and is terminated upon RESNET's determining whether the applicant meets the accreditation standard and notifying the applicant.

6.E.2. Applications reviewed under 5.D.1, "RESNET Review"

Within 45 days of receipt of a complete application, the BOP accrediting review committee will review the submission for compliance to the accreditation standards set forth within and either: forward the application and review checklist to RESNET and notify the applicant of this action, or forward to the applicant a request for additional information or clarification.

6.E.3 Within 15 days of receipt of the recommendation of the BOP accrediting review committee, RESNET will review the submissions, make a determination of whether the applicant meets the accreditation standard, and if it does issue a unique BOP provider accreditation identification number. This initial accreditation is valid for a period of three years from the date of issuance. The accreditation will be incorporated into a national registry of accredited BOP providers and listed on the RESNET web site on the Internet. In order to maintain currency and credibility for the registry, renewal of accreditation is required triennially.

6.E.4 If RESNET determines that the applicant does not meet the accreditation standard, it shall inform the applicant, identify where the applicant failed to meet the accreditation standard, and inform the applicant its right of remedy under 8.B.

6.F. Responsibilities of Accredited BOP Providers

The accredited BOP provider is responsible for insuring that all of the BOP inspections conducted issued by the system comply with all of the criteria by which the system was accredited.

**7.0 Renewal**

7.A. BOP provider application for renewal

Accredited BOP providers must submit an “Application for Renewal” no later than 120 days prior to the expiration of the current accreditation period. Renewal shall be required every three years after the issuance of the unique accreditation registration number by RESNET. Renewal applications will be processed in the same manner as an initial application.

7.B. Late Application

Applications received later than specified above will be processed, to the maximum extent feasible, so that the accreditation does not expire. Should the expiration date pass, the applicant will be granted an extension not to exceed 30 days.

7.C. Successful Renewals

Successful renewals will be noted on the national registry and communicated to the applicant by RESNET.

7.D. Renewal Applications Extending Beyond the Grace Period

Renewals extending beyond the grace period will be noted as “pending” on the national registry and the applicant will be advised to cease representing themselves as accredited until the application receives approval.

7.E. Accreditation Not Renewed Accredited BOP providers that elect not to renew or fail to meet renewal requirements will be removed from the national registry and so advised.

7.F. Appeals

BOP providers whose accreditation has been revoked, and are exercising their right of appeal will be noted as pending and the BOP provider will be advised to cease representing themselves as accredited until the appeal is resolved.

7.G. Program Element Changes

It is the accredited BOP provider's responsibility to provide RESNET with any proposed changes in the program's minimum BOP inspector certification procedures, minimum inspector training standards, minimum inspector certification standards, operation policies and procedures, or other information that effects its meeting the minimum accreditation criteria. Proposed changes will be evaluated by the accrediting review body in the same manner as the original or renewal application.

## **8.0 Suspension and Revocation of Accreditation**

### **8.A. For failure to correct deficiencies of the accredited BOP provider**

If RESNET determines at any time that an accredited BOP provider has failed to adhere to the accreditation requirements, the accreditation committee shall notify the BOP provider of the specified deficiencies and shall require that specific corrective action, set forth in the notification, be taken not later than 30 calendar days after the date set forth in such notification.

8.A.1. In the event that the deficiencies have not been remedied, RESNET shall have the authority to immediately begin the process of suspension by issuance of a Notice of Suspension Proceedings. Such Suspension Proceedings shall follow the due process procedures contained in 7.C below. The notice may be appealed in accordance with procedures set forth in Section 8.0.

8.A.2. In the event that the specified deficiencies are not corrected within the application period set forth in the Notice of Suspension, a Notice of Revocation Proceeding shall be issued by the accreditation committee. Such Revocation Proceedings shall follow the due process procedures contained in 7.C below. The Notice of Revocation may be appealed in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 8.0.

### **8.B. For Cause**

Any BOP provider accredited by RESNET may have the accreditation revoked in any of the following circumstances:

8.B.1. Upon a determination by RESENT that an accredited BOP provider has acted in such a manner as to impair the objectivity or integrity of the accreditation program or harm the reputation of the accreditation committee including, but not limited to submission of false information to the accreditation review body, or failure to submit to the accreditation review body any material information required to be submitted by the BOP provider, in connection with obtaining or maintaining accreditation;

knowingly or negligently issuing BOP checklists that fail to meet all of the accreditation criteria; or misrepresentation by the BOP provider in advertising or promotional materials of its accreditation status in general or with respect to any service provided by the BOP provider.

8.B.2. Pursuant to any of the express provisions of Section 7.A.1. or any of the express provisions of the accreditation application, including but not limited to the following:

- a. BOP provider goes out of business;
- b. BOP provider does not re-apply at the end of existing accreditation period;
- c. Failure to satisfy accreditation requirements on renewal;
- d. Investigated and validated consumer complaints;
- e. Willful misconduct;
- f. Failure to disclose a self-serving interest.

8.B.3. Upon expiration of a BOP provider's right to appeal a suspension of accreditation pursuant to Section 7.A.1.

#### 8.C. Suspension/Revocation Due Process

RESNET shall comply with the following due process procedures in considering any suspension or revocation actions against an accredited BOP provider.

##### 8.C.1. Notice

RESNET may, at its discretion, initiate a proposed suspension or revocation action against an accredited BOP provider by providing the provider and the accrediting review body that reviewed the BOP provider's application written notice of the proposed action sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the BOP provider. Such notice shall inform the subject BOP provider of the entire basis and justification for the proposed action.

##### 8.C.2 Contest of Proposed Suspension/Revocation

A respondent may contest a proposed suspension/revocation by filing a response with RESNET within 30 days of receipt of the notice. The response shall contain all pertinent and substantive information and argument that is in contradiction to the proposed suspension/revocation, including identification of all disputed materials and facts. If the respondent fails to file said response within the allotted time, RESNET may, in its discretion, suspend/revoke the accreditation of the respondent effective immediately upon written notification to the respondent.

### 8.C.3 Hearing

If the respondent files a timely response contesting the proposed suspension/revocation and requests a hearing, RESNET will appoint an independent, unbiased, and qualified hearing officer and issue a decision on the proposed suspension/revocation. The hearing officer will review the notice of suspension/revocation and the respondent's contest. If the hearing officer finds that the respondent's contest has raised substantiated and valid factual argument to the contrary of the proposed suspension/revocation, the respondent shall be afforded an opportunity to participate in an open and public telephonic hearing, and to submit additional documentary evidence, and rebuttal argument to any material contained in the original notice of suspension/revocation or developed during the course of the hearing officer's investigation. The notice shall be provided to the respondent by written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the BOP provider at a minimum of 120 days before the scheduled hearing.

### 8.C.4. Hearing Officer's Decision

The hearing officer shall issue a written decision on the proposed suspension/revocation that is based on all the information contained in the hearing record including statements of the factual and legal basis of the decision. If the hearing officer decides to impose suspension or revocation, the decision must include findings regarding all disputed materials, and justification for all findings. A suspension/revocation decision by the hearing officer shall take effect upon the issuance of the hearing officer's decision and the written notification of such decision to the respondent.

### 8.C.5 No Ex Parte Communication

No ex parte communication between the parties and the hearing officer shall be allowed.

## **9.0 Appeals Procedures for Application Not Being Approved, Suspension, or Revocation**

### 9.A. Notification

RESNET shall notify the BOP provider and the accreditation review body of any decisions. Additionally, the committee shall clearly notify the BOP provider of the procedures and right to remedy.

## 9.B. Appeal

- 9.B.1. In the event that an accreditation application was not approved or the accreditation has been suspended, the BOP provider shall have the right, for a period of 30 calendar days after the date of notice, to appeal to RESNET.
- 9.B.2. In the event that a BOP provider's accreditation is suspended following the expiration of the period to appeal a suspension, in the absence of an appeal having been taken, the BOP provider shall have the right, at its election, for a period of 30 calendar days after the date of issue of a Notice of Suspension, to appeal to RESNET.
- 9.B.3. An appeal shall be in writing and sent by certified mail or other method which provides evidence of delivery to the Executive Director of RESNET and shall specify the basis for the appeal.
- 9.B.4. The appellant BOP provider may, at the time of noticing its appeal, request in writing, a hearing by RESNET. In such an event, the accreditation committee shall, not later than 7 calendar days after the filing of the notice of appeal, notify the appellant BOP provider of the date of the hearing, which shall be held as expeditiously as possible, but not later than 30 calendar days after the receipt of the notice of appeal.

## 10.0 Revision of Accreditation Procedures

From time to time it may become necessary to revise or amend the accreditation procedures set forth in this document. Circumstances that may lead to such revision or amendment include but are not limited to the following:

1. To respond to periodic reviews by the promulgating bodies;
2. To respond to changes in law;
3. To respond to technological innovations; and
4. To respond to proposals for change from interested parties.

### 10.A. Periodic review of accreditation procedures

At least triennially, the provisions set forth in these accreditation procedures shall be reviewed by a review committee appointed by RESNET. The review committee may be composed of representatives of the EPA ENERGY STAR Homes Program, accredited home energy rating systems, and accredited BOP providers. At a minimum, this review shall include consideration and evaluation of changes in the law, technological innovations, and comments received from interested parties.

10.B. Process for submitting proposals to change accreditation procedures:

10.B.1 Proposals to change these accreditation procedures may be submitted in writing, at any time, to RESNET.

10.B.2 All proposals to change that meet the criteria set forth in this section of these procedures shall be accepted for consideration and evaluation.

10.B.3 Proposals to change these accreditation procedures shall include the following:

- a. Identification of the proposal to change, including the following minimum information:
  - (i) Proponent(s) full name(s),
  - (ii) Organizational affiliation(s) or representation(s),
  - (iii) Full mailing address(es),
  - (iv) Daytime phone number(s),
  - (v) Signature of primary proponent, and
  - (vi) Date
- b. Specific revisions to the procedures in a format that clearly identifies the manner in which the procedures are to be altered (ie. underline/strikeout format or equivalent). Any proposal to change that does not include proposed alteration(s) shall be rejected and returned to the proponent.
- c. Substantive reason(s) or justification for each proposed change. The lack of substantive justification for a proposed change may result in the return of the proposals to change to the proponent(s).
- d. Supporting documentation that may be needed for the reasoned evaluation of the proposal.

10.B.4 Proposals to change these procedures shall be considered and evaluated at least annually.

- a. The effective date of any annual revisions to these accreditation procedures shall be January 1.
- b. Only those proposals to change that are received on or prior to the last working day of June shall be considered for the revisions to these accreditation procedures that may become effective on January 1 of the following year.

10.C Accreditation Procedure Revision Process

10.C.1 Revision to these accreditation procedures shall occur only after the relevant proposals to change have been subjected to public scrutiny and comment using the following review process:

- a. The Revision Evaluation Committee shall be responsible for conducting the periodic evaluation and the annual evaluation of proposals to change through a consensus process, whereby both consenting and the non-consenting opinions are documented and incorporated as comments into each report or proposal to change.
- b. Following initial evaluation by the Revision Evaluation Committee, proposals to change shall be posted on the RESNET Web Page for a period of not less than 30 days during which public comment shall be accepted.
- c. Following the public comment period, the Revision Evaluation Committee shall meet to reconcile public comments with the initial comments of the Revision Evaluation Committee and, if changes are determined necessary, a final set of recommended changes with consensus comments that considers public comments shall be prepared on each proposal for change.
- d. Proposals for change receiving two-thirds majority support from the Revision Evaluation Committee after public comment shall be incorporated into a set of revised accreditation procedures.

10.C.2 The revised accreditation procedures shall be published on the RESNET Web Page and submitted to the original adopting members of these accreditation procedures not later than the end of September each year in which changes are recommended.