

COVID-19 Hardship Relief Policy for Onsite Diagnostics and Testing

April 27, 2020

The DOE Zero Energy Ready Home team will consider case-by-case hardship relief requests related to the use [RESNET's COVID-19 Pandemic Exception for Onsite Airtightness Tests](#). In some cases, the DOE ZERH program will allow the use of defaults for testing, per the RESNET temporary policy, such as blower door and duct blaster tests, when a hardship is demonstrated by the builder and/or rater. These hardships must be related to limits due to COVID-19 challenges.

Examples of hardships that will be considered:

- Strict shelter-in-place policy in jurisdiction does not allow rater to access the building site, preventing 3rd-party testing in a timely manner.
- Completed home is occupied and homeowner objects to onsite testing
- Rater field staff is under self-isolation due to positive COVID-19 test or suspected symptoms and no staff can feasibly perform testing in a timeline manner.
- Home transaction must meet contract or incentive program certification requirement.

DOE ZERH partners should contact the program at zero@newportpartnersllc.com to request a hardship waiver that would allow them to use the RESNET default values instead of conducting onsite testing.

Partners that are approved for a hardship waiver would also be allowed to perform a calculation to satisfy the DOE ZERH Efficient Hot Water Distribution provision, instead of conducting the hot water delivery field test. The calculation requires using the piping or tubing interior diameter and the system length based on plans, to verify that the hot water distribution system meets the DOE ZERH requirement.

Note: ENERGY STAR and EPA Indoor airPLUS rules may preclude any home that is granted a hardship waiver under this policy from receiving official ENERGY STAR or EPA Indoor airPLUS certification.