

Building newsflash 355*

NatHERS protocols for energy rating software and accrediting organisations for house energy assessors

*This newsflash is an update of version of 355 which was issued on 5 March 2009

Purpose

To advise of changes to the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) protocols for energy rating software and accrediting organisations for house energy assessors (update of newsflash 355 issued on 4 March 2009).

Background

Compliance with the energy efficiency performance requirements of the National Construction Code (NCC) (Part 2.6 of Volume Two and Section J of Volume One) for residential buildings can be demonstrated using one of the following four assessment methods:

- approved software (to generate a star energy rating)
- elemental provisions (formerly known as 'deemed-to-satisfy' or DTS provisions)
- verification (compared with a design that is known to comply)
- peer review (expert judgement).

If the software method is used, thermal energy calculations must be made using approved energy rating software that complies with the NatHERS National Administrator's *Software Accreditation Protocol* (June 2012). This Protocol combines and replaces the *Procedure for Accrediting Software under the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (April 2007 and 2011)* and the Australian Building Codes Board *Protocol for House Energy Rating Software (May 2005 - Version 2005.1)*.

The *Software Accreditation Protocol* was prepared by the NatHERS National Administrator (the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency) with the assistance of state and territory governments and the Australian Building Codes Board. It came into effect on 26 June 2012 and is available at

www.nathers.gov.au/software

Building certifiers assessing building applications should be satisfied that the house energy assessor has used currently accredited software. Under sections 17 and 18 of the Building Regulation 2006, a building certifier must also decide whether the house energy assessor is competent to assist with building design or specifications.

Legislation

Sections 10 and 30 of the *Building Act 1975*
Sections 17 and 18 of the Building Regulation 2006

Approved software

There are currently three accredited software tools available for use in rating the thermal performance (energy efficiency) of residential buildings:

- [AccuRate](#)
- [BERS Professional](#)
- [FirstRate5](#).

All three software tools use the same underlying calculation engine ('Chenath Engine') that has been designed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). The difference between the tools is their user interface.

More information on approved software can be found at www.nathers.gov.au/software

Assessor accrediting organisations protocol

The NatHERS National Administrator developed the *NatHERS Protocol for Assessor Accrediting Organisations* (June 2008) to approve organisations that accredit house energy assessors using NatHERS software for regulatory purposes.

The NatHERS National Administrator has approved two assessor accrediting organisations:

- Association of Building Sustainability Assessors (ABSA) www.absa.net.au
- Building Designers Association Victoria (BDAV) www.bdav.org.au/thermal-performance-assessors

Further information about the protocol and accreditation for house energy assessors can be found at www.nathers.gov.au/assessors

In determining under sections 17 and 18 of the Building Regulation 2006 whether a house energy assessor is competent, building certifiers may wish to consider whether they are accredited by an approved assessor accrediting organisation.

Being accredited by an approved assessor accrediting organisation ensures that the house energy assessor:

- is qualified and has received appropriate training in the use of the software simulation and building thermal performance theory
- agrees to operate under a professional code of conduct that is approved under a national framework
- holds adequate professional indemnity insurance
- has access to technical support and continuing professional development training
- submits their house energy assessments to the accrediting organisation for quality assurance purposes.

Contact for further information

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