

March 6, 2020

Dear CalCERTS Raters:

We share your concerns with how COVID-19 is affecting our industry and our communities. As your HERS Provider we are working to keep you up-to-date on information that continues to change. HERS Raters have been identified as part of the [Essential Critical Workforce](#). As such, many questions about health and safety responsibilities are surfacing. HERS Raters should heed all guidance from their local public health authorities on keeping themselves and their employees safe.

In response to procedural questions regarding HERS verifications, please note the following:

***HERS is an important component of Health and Safety Inspections***

HERS Raters are third-party special inspectors that serve as an extension of local code enforcement agencies. HERS Raters perform inspections that require special training and special equipment beyond the normal scope of most building departments. These inspections are related to the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (BEES), Title 24, Part 6. ***Many of the inspections have direct health and safety implications.*** HERS inspections are directly related to the indoor air quality of a home and how it affects the health and safety of occupants. Indoor air quality can be severely impacted by systems that don't meet Title 24 guidelines. The following are just a few examples:

- **Duct Leakage (Return):** Can introduce a significant amount of impurities from attic environments such as rodent feces, fiberglass, asbestos, toxins, chemicals, and accumulated dust. Outside of the obvious health impacts, this type of leakage often bypasses the return filter, causing blower motor/housings and evaporator coils to be impacted. Once impacted, even if the original leakage is repaired, the equipment could continue to transmit unwanted substances into a conditioned environment.
- **Duct Leakage (Supply):** If significant enough, can cause a home to be placed into negative pressure. Depending on the location of CO emitting equipment such as water heaters, automobiles, and clothing dryers, it could cause a dangerous environment for residents. The other aspect of negative pressure in a home is infiltration. As an HVAC system is forced to keep up with air demand, the air is drawn from uncontrolled leaks in the home. Any of those leaks can have the same impurities found in attic environments.
- **Airflow:** HVAC systems can often be the primary air filtration system in the home. Poor indoor air filtration results in the proliferation of airborne micro-particles that affect respiratory health, including molds and viruses. Properly designed airflow can also play a significant role in humidity control in a home and can impact the overall health of occupants.
- **IAQ Mechanical Ventilation:** Poor ventilation results in the buildup of toxic chemicals and carcinogens in a home.

- **Building Airtightness:** Uncontrolled outside air infiltration results in the introduction of excess smoke and pollutants during low air quality incidents.

### ***Regarding Remote Verification Protocols and Modified HERS Protocols***

Please note that CalCERTS is not a rulemaking body and the Residential Appendices don't account for the unprecedented situation we are facing. Given requests for guidance, we suggest the following:

- If you choose to conduct *remote inspections* in conjunction with help from relevant trades, we strongly suggest you adhere as closely to the HERS protocols *as possible*, while placing health and safety as your priority.
- We recommend that an inspection log with video and photo records be kept. CalCERTS has released a [Projects Notes Feature](#) to assist with this for certain project types.
- If a *modified* HERS inspection protocol is used because of local jurisdiction requirements or CDC COVID-19 guidance, it is the Rater's responsibility to ensure the method of inspection is valid for the purposes of the CF3R certifications.

### ***Regarding CalCERTS Quality Assurance***

- CalCERTS is currently working with Raters and Building Departments to address the COVID-19 crisis. We hope to release updated information and tools soon.
- Quality Assurance will take into consideration any complications that may have occurred due to COVID-19, especially those with regards to placing health and safety as your priority.
- Our Quality Assurance goal is to mentor and train HERS Raters to be effective champions for the industry and homeowners. It is not our goal to penalize Raters that are earnestly pursuing testing to the best of their abilities.
- We are ALWAYS willing to discuss the QA Review of any address with you regarding mitigating factors, especially now.

### ***COVID-19 HERS Safety Protocols***

Please note that we are not experts on safety when it comes to COVID-19. We strongly suggest that Raters follow all relevant [CDC and public health guidelines](#) to help aid in stopping the transmission of COVID-19. The [BIA](#) and [OSHA have also distributed some guidelines](#) that may be beneficial to Raters. Additional considerations for HERS Raters may include exercising special care near occupants; cleaning and sanitizing Rating equipment; and allocating additional time for inspections.

The CalCERTS Quality Assurance Team is here to support you as we navigate this crisis together. We can be reached for Quality Assurance related issues at (916) 805-5238 or [qa@calcerts.com](mailto:qa@calcerts.com).

Sincerely,



**David Choo**  
*Director of Quality Assurance*  
CalCERTS, Inc.

