

Public Comment from Rob Falke, President National Comfort Institute
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2013 BUILDING ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS – NONRESIDENTIAL
ACCEPTANCE TEST TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION
DOCKET NUMBER 12-BSTD-2 CEC-400-2012-013-ISOR

SECTION 10-103-B – NONRESIDENTIAL MECHANICAL ACCEPTANCE TEST
REQUIREMENTS

The following edits, additions and comment related to the Nonresidential Mechanical Acceptance Test Requirements are submitted for the Energy Commission's consideration and inclusion:


2013 Building Energy Efficiency Standards Page 7

NONRESIDENTIAL MECHANICAL ACCEPTANCE

TEST REQUIREMENTS SECTION 10-103-(b) 1. B. B. If there are less than 1,000 Mechanical Acceptance Test Technicians certified to perform all of the acceptance tests in Title 24, Part 6, Section 120.5, then there shall be at least 1,000 Mechanical Acceptance Test Technicians certified to complete the following tests:

- (i) NA7.5.1 Outdoor Air Ventilation Systems
- (ii) NA7.5.2 Constant Volume, Single Zone Unitary Air Conditioners and Heat Pumps
- (iii) NA7.5.4 Air Economizer Controls
- (iv) NA7.5.5 Demand Control Ventilation Systems
- (v) NA 7.5.6 Supply Fan Variable Flow Controls
- (vi) NA7.5.7, NA7.5.9 Hydronic System Variable Flow Controls
- (vii) NA7.5.10 Automatic Demand Shed Controls

The number of certified Mechanical Acceptance Test Technicians shall be demonstrated by Certification Provider-provided reports submitted to the Energy Commission.


C. Until the number of certified Mechanical Acceptance Test Technicians is demonstrated, mechanical contractors and other mechanical energy professionals will continue to be permitted to complete the tests listed above and prepare the required compliance documents. 

We submit this comment to clarify that during this interim period that the parties currently permitted to complete the tests and compliance documents will continue to be enabled to do so. We believe especially that the ability of the installing contractor to meet and increase compliance is essential to this ruling.

2013 Building Energy Efficiency Standards Page 10

NONRESIDENTIAL MECHANICAL ACCEPTANCE


TEST REQUIREMENTS SECTION 10-103-(c)

(c) 4. The Mechanical ATTCP shall demonstrate sufficient quality assurance, oversight and accountability measures to ensure quality control of its certification program, including third party assessment. ~~and accreditation pursuant to the ISO/IEC 17024 standard.~~ Quality assurance shall include site visits to ensure the integrity of the curriculum and training. 

We believe the inclusion of the ISO/IEC 17024 standard in the ruling is exclusionary and restrictive to the goal of the ruling and should be removed from the language. The ongoing attempt to restrict the control of compliance in California to special interest groups is in direct opposition to the goal of increased compliance and the ability to make compliance cost effective and available to an increased number of California consumers.

2013 Building Energy Efficiency Standards Page 11
NONRESIDENTIAL MECHANICAL ACCEPTANCE
TEST REQUIREMENTS SECTION 10-103-(e)

5. Interim approval for all ATTCPs shall end on the later date of, July 1, 2014 or six months after the effective date of the 2013 California Building Energy Efficiency Standards. The Energy Commission may extend the interim approval period for up to six additional months total, if it determines the threshold requirements in Section 10-103-B(b) have not been met for the certification requirements to take effect. If the Energy Commission determines that an extension is necessary, its determination shall be approved at a publicly-noticed meeting.

6. During the interim approval period or any extensions of the interim period, the Energy Commission may approve additional ATTCP providers that meet the existing or revised requirements specified in 103 B prior to or after the adoption of the standard. 

We support the principle that qualified installing contractors and other energy professionals are best suited to inspect, test and verify the systems they design, build, install and service. To continue to encourage and grow this segment of the compliance movement, this statement should be included in this ruling.

A review of the required content for the curriculum reveals certification training topics and principles that have not been traditionally included in test and balance training. Previously each of the three preapproved Acceptance Test Technician Certification Providers may not have included these principles in their standard training. May we suggest that it may be more productive to apportion the curricula items describe in (c).3.B.(i) in the same manner that describes the interim acceptance tests in (b).B.

One long term concern we have is the effect the interim approval may have on the willingness of organizations and individuals to invest and participate in the program. The concern that the goal of 1000 technicians may not be reached by the end of the interim period will be a consideration in the ramping up of the regulation. Many have lost confidence from the lack of compliance in the residential sector.

Can plans be put in place at this time to assure this verification method will succeed and provide a reasonable return for those that invest in it? Good business sense is always a component of the success of a regulation that expects companies and individuals to pursue enterprise to support compliance.

In the future we anticipate an eventual verification method enabling an installing contractor to perform mechanical testing and inspection compliance for the light commercial and other markets.