

StopWaste Home Energy Score Quality Assurance and Quality Control Protocols

Introduction

StopWaste is a regional Home Energy Score partner serving the San Francisco Bay Area. StopWaste uses desktop Quality Assurance (QA) and in-field Quality Control (QC) protocols to ensure that Home Energy Score Assessors report participant data accurately and that Home Energy Scores are generated in accordance with Department of Energy (DOE) participation requirements and guidelines.

TERMS

Home Energy Score Assessor or Assessor refers to home inspectors, contractors, raters or other professionals that have been accepted into the StopWaste Home Energy Score partnership. In order to participate in the program, Assessors must meet certain eligibility and ongoing performance requirements, including the StopWaste QA/QC requirements.

Home Energy Score Assessment or Assessment refers to the process of visiting a home and determining all of the data needed to generate a Home Energy Score using the DOE's Home Energy Scoring Tool. The final steps in an Assessment include generating a Home Energy Score and sharing the results with a client, although report generation and sharing may take place after the Assessor has left the home.

Quality Assurance refers to checks provided by the program on participant data, including a comparison between Home Energy Score data inputs and results, as well as any supplemental data the Home Energy Score Assessor is asked to provide to the program. The QA process also tracks rebate payments, to ensure that rebates are paid for properly completed Home Energy Scores, and resolve any errors or irregularities that may impact the delivery of a Home Energy Score and Assessor rebate.

Quality Control refers to the in-field mentoring and shadowing of Home Energy Score Assessments to ensure that Home Energy Score Assessors properly gather and document inputs for each Home Energy Score Report.

Rebates may be available to Assessors to offset the added cost of providing a Home Energy Score to their clients.

Quality Assurance Process and Requirements for Assessors

PROGRAM APPLICATION/ENROLLMENT

The program administrators will provide interested parties with a list of requirements for becoming StopWaste Home Energy Score Assessors, and will gather the necessary information about each applicant. The program administrators will ensure that each applicant completes all

program enrollment and training requirements, and has obtained their Home Energy Score Assessor ID before the applicant is officially enrolled in the program. The program administrators will regularly communicate with applicants any missing or incorrect information that is needed during the enrollment process, at least once a week.

ASSESSOR ORIENTATION

After an Assessor has completed the enrollment process, program administrators will hold a coaching session to ensure that Assessors have access and understand the Home Energy Score promotional tools available from DOE, and the StopWaste QA/QC requirements. Program administrators will also coordinate with Assessors to arrange for their on-site mentoring session, and ensure that they are prepared for the session.

Upon successful completion of the mentoring session, program administrators will continue to maintain contact with participants. Program administrators will conduct a bi-weekly check-in with each Assessor until the Assessor has completed five Assessments. After that, check-ins will be scheduled on a monthly basis or as needed.

DATA COLLECTION and HOME ENERGY SCORE REPORTS

Each Assessor is responsible for collecting the building data necessary to generate a Home Energy Score. The program will provide Assessors a data collection form that consists of the required input fields for generating a Home Energy Score. As needed, the program administrators may request a copy of a completed data collection form—or an equivalent record of collected data—to confirm that the necessary information has been collected for the home. For Assessments where the Assessor has not provided adequate information, or appears to rely on default information in cases where home-specific data should be known, the program administrators may request additional information or corrections.

Quality Control Process and Requirements for Assessors

MENTORING

The first Home Energy Score conducted by an Assessor will be a mentoring session, during which a qualified program administrator will observe the Assessors' work in the home, leading up to and including generation of a Home Energy Score report. During the mentoring session, the program administrator will offer guidance on best practices, and point out any errors or deficiencies in the Assessor's data collection and Home Energy Score generation approach. The Assessor will need to correct any errors or deficiencies related to the Home Energy Score Report.

If the Assessor is unable to properly complete the Home Energy Score without significant guidance from the mentor, a mentoring session will be required for the Assessor's second Home Energy Score. If an Assessor continues to require significant guidance to properly complete a Home Energy Score, the program administrator will discuss additional training options with the Assessor. The program administrator may require that the Assessor complete those additional training courses before another Home Energy Score is completed.

SHADOWING

After the Assessor has completed his or her mentoring session(s), the program will conduct an on-site “shadow” inspection on 5% (1 in 20) of his or her next Assessments. Within every set of 20 Assessments completed by an Assessor, a program administrator will randomly select which Assessment will be shadowed. Before the Assessment is to be conducted, the program administrator will coordinate with the Assessor to meet at the scheduled Home Energy Score Assessment for that house. This shadow session will cover data collection and data entry into the Home Energy Scoring Tool, and not any unrelated aspects of a home inspection that may coincide with the Home Energy Score Assessment.

During the shadow session, the program administrator will not provide feedback to the Assessor. After the session, the program administrator will provide feedback to the Assessor and request that the Assessor correct any deficiencies. If the shadow session uncovers three or more minor deficiencies/errors or a major deficiency/error (i.e., an error that would affect the Home Energy Score number assigned to the home), the Assessor will be consulted and required to retake the DOE training and/or a mentoring session, at the discretion of the program administrator.

Maintaining a Qualified Assessor Status

In addition to the program’s QA/QC requirements, each Assessor must also follow these requirements:

- Assessors need to score homes on a consistent basis in order to maintain an active status; each Assessor must score at least one home every four months (120 days) in order to be considered active.
- Any Assessor who has not scored a home in 120 days will lose their active status and be changed to inactive.
- Inactive Assessors will be required to complete a training refresher exercise on the Sim training and testing site in order to be re-activated.
- The Assessor’s status will be re-activated once they have completed the exercise by correctly scoring a “Challenge Home” in the Sim Tool.
- Once access has been provided, the assessor can train and test at any time – no direct oversight or proctor is required to complete the Sim refresher training exercise.
- If an Assessor is unable to correctly score the “Challenge Home” after three attempts, the assessor will be required to re-take and pass Part I of the Home Energy Score exam before being re-activated.
- Assessor must provide an annual certification letter stating that they continue to maintain the required minimum levels of insurance coverage as outlined in Appendix A of the StopWaste Participation Agreement.