

FAQ about Home Energy Ratings (HERS):

What is a HERS?

A home energy rating involves an analysis of a home's construction plans and onsite inspections. Based on the home's plans, the Home Energy Rater uses an energy efficiency software package to perform an energy analysis of the home's design. This analysis yields a projected, pre-construction HERS Index. Upon completion of the plan review, the rater will work with the builder to identify the energy efficiency improvements needed to ensure the house will meet ENERGY STAR performance guidelines.

How is a HERS Index calculated?

The rater conducts onsite inspections, typically including a blower door test (to test the leakiness of the house) and a duct test (to test the leakiness of the ducts). Results of these tests, along with inputs derived from the home's plan review, are used to generate the HERS Index for the home.

What are HERS used for?

Unlike a Building Performance Audit or a weatherization assessment, a home energy rating is a recognized tool in the mortgage industry. Home energy ratings can be used in a variety of ways in the housing industry. Since a rating quantifies the energy performance of a home, the HERS Index provides an easily understandable means to compare the relative energy efficiency of different homes.

The HERS Index

The HERS Index is a scoring system established by the Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) in which a home built to the specifications of the HERS Reference Home (based on the 2006 International Energy Conservation Code) scores a HERS Index of 100, while a net zero energy home scores a HERS Index of 0. The lower a home's HERS Index, the more energy efficient it is in comparison to the HERS Reference Home.

Each 1-point decrease in the HERS Index corresponds to a 1% reduction in energy consumption compared to the HERS Reference Home. Thus a home with a HERS Index of 85 is 15% more energy efficient than the HERS Reference Home and a home with a HERS Index of 80 is 20% more energy efficient.