

EPA ENERGY STAR® FAQ – Third-Party Certification

1. **Q: When will the ENERGY STAR Third - Party Certification requirements go into effect?**
A : January 1, 2011.
2. **Q: Will products I qualified prior to January 1, 2011 have to be retested after the effective date in order to remain qualified?**
A : Currently qualified products will not need to be retested to remain qualified. However, for most ENERGY STAR product categories, specification changes are pending or anticipated in 2011 or early 2012. For these categories, no product model will be permitted to carry the ENERGY STAR label after the effective date of the specification change unless it is third - party certified. For a small number of product categories, where EPA is not anticipating near - term specification changes, EPA will require that manufacturers submit both new and existing products for verification testing through an EPA - recognized CB.
3. **Q: Must I use an accredited laboratory?**
A : Yes, you are required to have products tested for ENERGY STAR in a laboratory that is accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 for the relevant test procedures. EPA has made an exception for first - party laboratories to conduct testing if they are enrolled in an EPA - recognized CB's supervised or witnessed manufacturers' testing laboratory (SMTL/WMTL) program, which includes demonstrating compliance with ISO 17025 as described in Appendix A of the [Conditions and Criteria for Recognition of Certification Bodies for the ENERGY STAR Program](#).
4. **Q: How will ENERGY STAR partners qualify products under the new third - party certification requirements?**
A : ENERGY STAR partners have historically been able to test their products in any laboratory of their choice, and submit product data directly to EPA for review pursuant to qualification. Under the new requirements, partners are required to have their products certified by an EPA - recognized Certification Body (CB) of their choice. Upon certification of a product, the CB will notify the partner that the product meets the ENERGY STAR requirements and will submit the qualified product data to EPA for listing on the ENERGY STAR website. See a [flowchart describing the details of the new procedure](#).
5. **Q: How does EPA recognition of ABs, Laboratories, or CBs work?**
A : The requirements that each organization must meet in order to gain recognition are available at www.energystar.gov/testingandverification.
6. **Q: Can I just test my product in an EPA - recognized lab and send the result to a CB?**
A : No, manufacturers must confirm with an EPA - recognized CB which labs are appropriate for conducting testing depending on the product type and the specific nature of the CB's Program.
7. **Q: Where can I find a list of EPA - recognized Accreditation Bodies (ABs), Laboratories, or CBs?**
A : The list of [EPA-Recognized Accreditation Bodies](#).
The list of [EPA-Recognized Certification Bodies](#).
The list of [EPA-Recognized Laboratories](#).
EPA continues to process applications for recognition, and will update these lists on an ongoing basis.
8. **Q: When may I begin to market my product as ENERGY STAR qualified?**
A : Partners may begin to market products as ENERGY STAR qualified as soon as they receive written notice from their CB that the product meets the ENERGY STAR specification. The only exception to this is the *first* product that a prospective Partner qualifies. In this case, EPA will need to complete the partner application process and provide the new ENERGY STAR partner with the label and ENERGY STAR Identity Guidelines to market its product as ENERGY STAR qualified.

9. Q: Will EPA continue to provide international recognition of products for ENERGY STAR?

A : EPA supports ongoing mutual recognition internationally. However, all products entering the US must meet EPA's third - party certification requirements effective January 1, 2011.

10. Q: How can an ENERGY STAR manufacturing partner add new models to previously-qualified product families after 1/1/11?

A : Consistent with product family definitions in the relevant specifications, manufacturers may add models to families previously qualified by EPA without additional testing. Partners should follow their current procedure (i.e., submit through OPS or product specific web addresses) for submitting additional members of an existing qualified family for review.

Product categories that allowed for product family qualification prior to January 1, 2011 include:

- Audio/Video Products
- Residential Ceiling Fans
- Commercial Hot Food Holding Cabinets
- Commercial Ovens
- Commercial Steam Cookers
- Computers
- Displays
- Integral LED Lamps
- Imaging Equipment
- Residential Dishwashers
- Residential Refrigerators and Freezers
- Computer Servers
- Solid-State Lighting Luminaires
- Residential Ventilating Fans
- Residential Water Heaters

For all other product categories, any third-party certified product families, manufacturers must work with an EPA-recognized Certification Body to add new models to previously-qualified product families.

11. Q: How many of my products will be subject to ongoing verification testing, and how often will this occur?

A : CBs are responsible for annually selecting at least 10% of the products that they have certified for verification testing. At least half of these products will be selected randomly. As such, the number of an individual Partner's products that are subject to verification testing in a given year will vary. CBs also have discretion to determine when products will be selected, so the testing may take place on a quarterly, bi - annual, or annual schedule depending on the CB and product category.

12. Q: Can I use a first - party laboratory for verification testing?

A : Only in some rare cases where off - the - line testing is the only feasible option will verification testing be allowed in a first - party laboratory. If the unit selected for verification is obtained off - the - line from the manufacturing facility, the verification testing may be performed at an EPA - recognized, first - party laboratory provided that qualified CB personnel witness the test. EPA anticipates that off - the - line testing will only be an option for extremely large, expensive, or custom - built products.

13. Q: If my company's product is the same as another company's product except for the brand name (for example, product X is a private labeled version of product Y, an OEM product), and product Y undergoes qualification, verification, or challenge testing, or a design change, then can product X be qualified, recertified, or decertified based on product Y's test results?

A : Yes. If both companies have submitted the product in question for certification through the same CB, and the CB agrees to recognize the two products as identical, then with the CB's consent a single report can fulfill the testing requirements for the products represented by that report.

14. Q: Who will fund the new third - party certification requirements?

A : The new testing and verification procedures will be partner - funded. Partners will pay laboratories and CBs directly.

15. Q: How long will it take the CB to review a test report?

A : EPA anticipates this will differ between product categories and CBs. As part of its application, a CB is required to provide EPA with a detailed description of its review process in order to allow EPA to estimate its potential impact on partners' product introduction cycles. EPA is working with CBs to ensure that certification occurs within a timeframe that adequately addresses partners' concerns regarding product development cycles, and time - to - market.

16. Q: Once a product is certified, does it still need to be reviewed by EPA before it is labeled?

A : No, EPA authorizes use of the ENERGY STAR mark to partners for products that meet all of the ENERGY STAR requirements, including certification by an EPA - recognized CB.

17. Q: Will EPA send someone to evaluate my laboratory during the recognition process?

A : No, EPA will not conduct a site visit. Instead, if you are seeking accreditation, staff from an EPA - recognized AB will conduct a site visit. If you are seeking enrollment in an EPA - recognized CB's supervised or witnessed manufacturers' testing laboratory (SMTL/WMTL) program, staff from that CB will conduct a site visit.

18. Q: What constitutes a product failure under verification testing?

A : ENERGY STAR products will be considered as failing under verification testing if they exceed the ENERGY STAR requirements outlined in the ENERGY STAR specifications. Partners should consult DOE for questions regarding DOE minimum efficiency requirements.

19. Q: Do partners need to provide updates to products if they still meet the ENERGY STAR requirements?

A : Beginning January 1, 2011, partners must notify the CB of changes to their certified products that impact the product's energy performance even if the product still meets the ENERGY STAR requirements. The CB will determine if additional test data is required.

20. Q: Must a first party accredited laboratory that has applied for and been granted EPA recognition enroll as a supervised manufacturer's testing laboratory (SMTL) with an EPA-recognized Certification Body?

A : No. As part of its status as a laboratory accredited by an EPA-recognized Accreditation Body, an EPA-recognized accredited first-party laboratory that has been formally recognized by the Agency by application does not have to have its tests supervised or witnessed by an EPA-recognized Certification Body. However, the CB may enroll such a laboratory as an SMTL if it so chooses.

21. Q: My laboratory tests External Power Supplies that are intended for ENERGY STAR qualification. Why is this product category not included in EPA's laboratory recognition application form?

A : The ENERGY STAR External Power Supplies, Digital - to - Analog Converter Boxes, and End - Use Products (with qualified External Power Supplies) programs will be sunset at the end of calendar year 2010.