

## Frequently Asked Questions

This document is intended to provide program specific information for utilities, PTCS certified technicians and companies about the BPA PTCS and Prescriptive duct sealing program. *Utility programs determine their own reimbursement criteria, which may include additional requirements above and beyond what BPA requires. Contractors should be aware of their customers' utility requirements before starting work.* Answers provided below may be revised if the program, BPA Implementation Manual, or PTCS specifications change.

### How to Participate

### PTCS and Prescriptive Resources

### Duct Sealing

### Heat Pumps

#### I) How to Participate

##### **How can I get a PTCS Technician ID?**

After the technician creates an [online account](#), the PTCS team has received the complete [application](#), and approved the training; the team will activate the account. The PTCS Technician ID will be sent to the email on file with the account.

##### **I have an industry certification. Can I get a certification without additional training?**

We accept several industry certifications. A list of all approved alternative certifications in the [PTCS Duct Sealing and Heat Pump Program Participation Requirements](#) is available.

##### **What if I change companies?**

Submit a new [Certified Technician Application](#) with your new company information and an explanation of what was updated to [ResHVAC@bpa.gov](mailto:ResHVAC@bpa.gov). Do not enter jobs completed with your new company before your account has been updated.

**How do I update my account if I get an additional certification?**

Submit a new [Certified Technician Application](#) to [ResHVAC@bpa.gov](mailto:ResHVAC@bpa.gov) and include your new certification and relevant training information.

**Do I need a new online account for each new certification I obtain?**

No. We will update your existing account with the additional certifications listed on your application.

**If I get locked out of my account or forget my password, should I create a new account?**

No. Please don't create another account since it will generate a duplicate account. Call the customer service team at 1-800-941-3867 and we can help you get the information you need.

**How do I become a trainer and/or inspector?**

Start by reviewing the [Program Participation Requirements](#), [Trainer Participation Application](#), and [Quality Assurance Inspector Application](#). Contact the PTCS Program if you have any questions.

**Where can I find information about upcoming training sessions?**

Visit the [PTCS Registry](#) for a list of upcoming trainings. If none are available please check the [PTCS Trainer list](#) to find contact information for a trainer near you. Each trainer will provide the details of when and where the next sessions will be, as well as their cost for the course. You could also work with your local utility to put on a session in your area.

**I just finished a PTCS certification course. How do I get to the point where I can do PTCS work and enter jobs into the registry?**

After completing your PTCS Heat Pump or Duct Seal certification class, go to the [PTCS Registry](#) and create your new user account. You must also send a completed and signed version of the [Certified Technician Application](#) form. Program staff will use this form to confirm your training and fully activate your online account by assigning a PTCS Technician ID#. Note: If you already have a PTCS Technician ID, please do not create a new account. Send a completed application form to [ResHVAC@bpa.gov](mailto:ResHVAC@bpa.gov) and the customer service staff will update your account accordingly.

## II) PTCS and Prescriptive Resources

### **I need something edited. Help!**

The PTCS team can edit submitted information for you without updating the measure ID. Contact them by email at [ResHVAC@bpa.gov](mailto:ResHVAC@bpa.gov) or call 1.800.941.3867.

### **When I submit a job online, do I have to notify the utility that it is completed?**

Yes. The technician and/or their company must notify the utility that a job is complete and entered into the site registry, and submit any required documentation.

### **What if there is more than one heat pump or duct sealing job at the home?**

Call the PTCS team at 1-800-941-3867 or email at [ResHVAC@bpa.gov](mailto:ResHVAC@bpa.gov).

### **How do I enter a job with a lot number?**

On the initial "Site Address" screen, please enter the site's lot number in the "Street Address 2" field.

### **What do I do if the address cannot be verified upon entry?**

Please verify the address is correct and email the form(s) to [ResHVAC@bpa.gov](mailto:ResHVAC@bpa.gov).

### **What do I do if a job I enter has a status of "Pending?"**

Two Options:

- Jobs in BPA territory: This team reviews jobs in a "Pending" status on a bi-weekly basis. Please call 1-800-941-3867 or email [ResHVAC@bpa.gov](mailto:ResHVAC@bpa.gov) for more immediate review.
- Jobs in Energy Trust territory (Pacific Power or PGE): Please call 1-866-365-3526 or email [Residentialforms@energytrust.org](mailto:Residentialforms@energytrust.org) if you require more immediate review or have any questions.

### **What is the difference between a job ID and a measure ID?**

No difference. These terms are referring to the same number, which is currently a 7-digit number.

### **What do I do if I have to re-enter a job or have to fix something that was already entered?**

- Jobs in BPA territory: Please call 1-800-941-3867 or email [ResHVAC@bpa.gov](mailto:ResHVAC@bpa.gov), if you require more immediate review or if you have any questions.
- Jobs in Energy Trust territory (Pacific Power or PGE): Please call 1-866-365-3526 or email [Residentialforms@energytrust.org](mailto:Residentialforms@energytrust.org).

### **Why do utility program requirements sometimes differ from BPA program requirements?**

Utilities receive reimbursements for installations in their territory that meet BPA's minimum requirements. Utilities may decide to require more than this BPA minimum standard for many reasons, such as greater energy savings or greater durability of installations. Certified Technicians should always check with their customers' utility before beginning work.

### **Does a PTCS Duct Sealing or Heat Pump Installation Form have to be filled out for every PTCS project?**

No. The Installation form is only required for GSHPs. The installation form is optional for Duct Sealing and Air Source Heat Pumps. The Registry Installation Report (obtained from the PTCS registry after entry) replaced the installation form. Check with utilities to verify their documentation requirements as they may differ.

### **How are individual measure specifications determined?**

The Regional Technical Forum's (RTF) PTCS Subcommittee is composed of industry experts who created the PTCS Specifications, and infrequently revise them. BPA may choose to adopt revised specifications, and when it does so the adopted specification will be posted on the [residential HVAC webpage](#). BPA may choose to include additional requirements for reimbursement, such as a higher efficiency rating, in addition to the adopted specifications. The [Implementation Manual](#) will list these additional requirements.

### **If a visual Quality Assurance Inspection indicates a full diagnostic QAI test would be prudent, would the diagnostic QAI test count towards the BPA requirement to randomly inspect 10% of PTCS jobs?**

A utility that visually inspects 100% of all duct sealing jobs and does diagnostic inspections of at least 10% of those where it is most apparently necessary is in compliance with the BPA quality assurance requirements, as long as heat pumps are also subject to random inspection. For utilities offering both PTCS duct sealing and PTCS heat pumps, inspection of duct sealing alone does not meet the BPA QA requirements.

### **Where can I find the most recent program forms and spec sheets?**

All of the most recent PTCS program information will be posted to <https://www.bpa.gov/EE/Sectors/Residential/Pages/PTCS-Participation-and-Certification.aspx>

### **I want to install Ground Source Heat Pumps for the PTCS program. What are the certification requirements?**

Technicians who wish to install Ground Source Heat Pumps for the PTCS program must be IGSHPA certified as an Accredited Installer, and have their PTCS Heat Pump Certification or, a PTCS heat pump tech and a IGSHPA tech can jointly install a unit. You can find out more about IGSHPA certification here: <http://www.igshpa.okstate.edu/index.htm>

### **Can a heat pump be installed by someone who is not a PTCS Certified Technician, as long as a PTCS Certified Technician “signs off” on the installation?**

If a PTCS Certified Technician submits PTCS paperwork for a new heat pump, that individual is taking responsibility for installation’s compliance with the specification. If an inspection finds that the system does not comply, the PTCS Certified Technician is responsible for bringing the project into compliance, and will have the results of all inspections attributed to their PTCS account. Previously installed heat pumps cannot be PTCS certified.

### **What should I do if the PTCS registry will not accept a site address or AHRI # for a job I’m trying to enter?**

Verify the address or AHRI # is valid, then fax (877-848-4074) or email ([ResHVAC@bpa.gov](mailto:ResHVAC@bpa.gov)) the form to the PTCS Program Team to enter the job for you.

### **I have an AHRI # that the PTCS registry does not recognize. Can I enter a different AHRI# that has the same equipment specs instead?**

No, this installation form needs to be faxed or emailed to PTCS for entry. Only enter information that is accurate and matches the Heat Pump installed. Incorrect information will be a problem if the site is checked for Quality Assurance, as it could mean the failure of the job and ineligibility for incentives.

### **How will I know if my Certified Technician Application form has been received?**

After the application form has been processed you will be able to use the registry. In addition your information will be posted on the next quarterly update of the [BPA Certified Technicians list](#). If you need confirmation prior to the list update, please contact the customer service team for confirmation at 800-941-3867 or [ResHVAC@bpa.gov](mailto:ResHVAC@bpa.gov). Please note that this information will *not* show in the technician’s online user account at <https://ptcs.bpa.gov>

### III) Duct Sealing

**As a contractor, how will I know if a home has already received a PTCS duct sealing measure?**

Search for it at the PTCS website/About the Program/Search Previous PTCS Certification by Address. Contractors may also call the homeowner's utility or the PTCS program directly; both can reference the PTCS database to determine if the ducts have previously been PTCS certified.

**What is a PTCS Certified-only job?**

A PTCS Certified-only job in the PTCS database means that the ducts were not leaky enough to qualify for the BPA reimbursement for duct sealing and that duct sealing is not required.

**Will a PTCS Duct Sealing job fail the Quality Assurance inspection if the existing ductwork has existing duct tape instead of mastic?**

If the ducts are tight enough without sealing, then no work, including removal of duct tape, is required. PTCS Quality Assurance inspectors shall not fail a test-only job based on PTCS duct sealing specifications. Ducts with pre- and post-tests must be sealed to PTCS specifications.

**When duct sealing is required, does the specification require duct tape be removed before mastic is applied?**

The PTCS Specification requires a good faith effort to remove duct tape and replace with mastic. Duct tape that cannot be removed shall be completely covered with mastic.

**What does it mean when the PTCS Specification requires that "all accessible ducts must be sealed"?**

If an inspector can reach the ducts in an unconditioned space then the ducts must be sealed.

**Who verifies how much of the ductwork is outside of the conditioned space?**

The PTCS certified technician provides this verification after identifying all ductwork in a home, including those in the crawlspace and attic. This is also verified by the Quality Assurance inspector.

**Are ducts buried in attic insulation considered accessible? If so, are contractors required by the program to bring the insulation back to the condition it was in before sealing work was done?**

Ducts in attic insulation are considered accessible. The program does not require attic insulation be returned to its previous state; however, customer comfort and net energy savings will all be higher if the insulation is returned to its original state or better. *Note: Weatherization specifications approved by the RTF require that ducts be sealed before insulation is added.*

**If the ducts are built into soffits, are they considered accessible?**

If the ducts in the soffits are not accessible then they are not required to be sealed.

**According to the [PTCS Duct Sealing Specification](#) Section 2 do I have to remove all insulation from accessible wyes, elbows and other duct connections to seal them?**

When the inspection finds that an insulated duct connection of any sort shows signs of leakage (discolored insulation is the most obvious sign) or shows signs of poor fit (wiggles or has highly improbable geometry), then the connection must be exposed, properly fastened, sealed and the insulation restored in a durable fashion to cover the connection **Section 7.1** provides guidance on exposing, sealing, etc. every plenum connection and plenum take-off (high pressure areas of the duct system).

**Does PTCS require technicians to open the belly of single wide mobile homes in order to seal the ducts to specifications?**

Yes. The belly of a manufactured home is considered an accessible location. PTCS requires that all accessible locations be sealed.

**There is loose, existing duct tape which is required to be removed before sealing. Should it be removed before the leakage test is done?**

BPA does not require removal of duct tape prior to testing, since homeowners will likely expect the ducts be returned to their original state if they are not sealed. However, the PTCS protocol does require removal of all tape before sealing, so if pretest is close to the precondition requirement, removal of the tape for the pretest is acceptable.

## IV) Heat Pumps

**Do Variable Speed heat pumps (with inverter technology) qualify for PTCS certification?**

Yes. Please refer to the [Variable Speed Heat Pumps Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

**Why is there a commissioning and controls measure for heat pumps?**

This measure exists for those installations that do not meet the minimum the 9.0 HSPF/ 14.0 SEER requirements for the PTCS heat pumps measure. The commissioning and controls reimbursement may be used on any heat pump that meets federal minimum standards, but is included in (and may not be claimed in addition to) PTCS heat pump measures. This measure is labeled "PTCS Certified Only" in the PTCS database.

**Where can I find the U.S. DOE minimum standard for Heat Pumps?**

<https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=EERE-2014-BT-STD-0048-0200>

**Where can I find a heat pump that fits in a manufactured home and meets the performance spec?**

At least 13 manufacturers have heat pumps that fit manufactured homes and meet the PTCS programs certified installation requirement of 9.0 HSPF or greater. Contact your manufacturer or the PTCS program for more information.

In the case of small and/or short furnace closet spaces in manufactured homes, enlarging this opening for the new heat pump may be necessary. In some cases, this may be accomplished by removing the current door and increasing the opening height to accommodate the taller more efficiency unit. A 6- to 8-inch high base-can may be needed to transition the new heat pump to the existing duct work. This new base-can may also be necessary to ensure proper air flow across the electric back up heat, to keep it from overheating.

The larger door opening will require a new door or access panel cover. A new hinged door and frame should be considered to cover the new furnace closet opening. Alternately, a smooth, painted, heavy gauge sheet metal sheet can be used and held in place with stainless steel Ludwig or similar type clips. A properly sized return air grill will have to be installed above or in the panel or door, if either is replacing a louvered door.

**Does the state of Washington have requirements for heat pumps installed in manufactured homes?**

The Washington State Legislature provides code guidance on their website

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=296-150M-0306>.

**When a combustion appliance zone (CAZ) is present, does the NSI 3000 Low Level CO Monitor meet BPA's requirement for a CO monitor?**

No. This unit is not currently UL or C-UL listed, according to the manufacturer, as of 6/3/2015.