



BBS MEMO

Ohio Board of Building Standards
9009

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6606 Tussing Road, P.O. Box 4009, Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068-

BLOWER DOOR TESTING REQUIREMENTS IN THE NEW 2013 RESIDENTIAL CODE OF OHIO (RCO)

Since the publication of the new RCO, the Board has received numerous inquiries about the new energy efficiency requirements for blower door testing. Blower door testing is one method of verifying that the building thermal envelope has been properly sealed to adequately limit air leakage to and from the conditioned space within the home. In order to properly understand when blower door testing is or is not required, one must first understand and identify which compliance path the owner (or the owner's representative) has chosen to demonstrate compliance. RCO Chapter 11, Section 1101.2 states the following:

1101.2 Compliance. Compliance shall be demonstrated by meeting the requirements of one of the following options:

1. The "International Energy Conservation Code"; or
2. Sections 1101 through 1104 of this chapter; or
3. Section 1105 – "The Ohio Home Builder's Association (OHBA) Alternative Energy Code Option."

The owner, not the building department, decides which compliance path to use and must communicate this choice to the building department.

Within each of the above compliance options, you will find a complete set of energy efficiency requirements. In a few cases, you will even find additional options or choices that need to be made and identified. The code offers these many options to allow the owner and/or the designer maximum flexibility in the design and building of a new home. Although the code offers many options for the owner and/or designer, it is precisely these many options that tend to confuse code users. The following table summarizes when a blower door testing is required:

Compliance path chosen (RCO 1101.2)	Blower Door Testing Required?	Allowable tested air leakage	Code reference
2009 IECC	Optional (Either conduct blower door test or perform visual inspection)	Less than 7 ACH 50	2009 IECC Section 402.4.2
RCO Sections 1101-1104	Optional (Either conduct blower door test or perform visual inspection)	Less than 7 ACH 50	2013 RCO Section 1102.4.2
RCO Section 1105 (OHBA Option)	Optional before 01-01-2014 Mandatory on/after 01-01-2014	Less than 6 ACH 50	2013 RCO Section 1105.2.4.2.1

There is no certification requirement prescribed in the RCO for those who conduct the blower door tests. Blower door testing, when required, may be performed by insulation contractors, HVAC contractors, builders, or any other person who knows how to use the equipment. The RCO Section 108.8 does not require that the inspector witness the test, but does require that the inspector be given the option to witness the test. The inspector may accept the written blower door testing report from a contractor if the inspector is not able to witness the test.

As shown in the table above, the RCO Section 1105.2.4.2.1 (the OHBA Option) prescribes a mandatory blower door testing requirement which takes effect one year after the effective date of the new RCO. The reason for the one year delay in implementation was to provide adequate time for contractors to purchase and become trained on the proper use of the blower door testing equipment.

If you have further questions regarding the blower door testing requirements in the RCO, please call the Board's office at 614-644-2613 or E-mail to dic.bbs@com.state.oh.us.