

## Frequently Asked Questions

This document is frequently updated. Answers provided may be revised if the program, BPA Implementation Manual or PTCS specifications change. The most current version of this document is effective when distributed. *Last updated October 5, 2011.*

**Q: Do ducts always have to be sealed when a new heat pump is installed to qualify as a PTCS Heat Pump upgrade or conversion?**

A: Not in all cases. When more than 50% of the heating ducts run through unconditioned space, ducts must be sealed and PTCS certified unless: 1) the ducts were previously certified, or 2) a PTCS duct leakage test indicates that the pre-existing duct leakage is too low to qualify for the PTCS duct sealing reimbursement. However, in those cases where the ducts are already tight, duct pre-test measurements shall be submitted to meet the PTCS Heat Pump measure requirement.

**Q: Will a PTCS Heat Pump job fail the Quality Assurance inspection if the existing ductwork has existing duct tape instead of mastic?**

A: If a heat pump is inspected, the QA inspector will confirm tightness of the ducts. If the ducts are tight enough without sealing, then no work, including removal of duct tape, is required. PTCS QA inspectors shall not fail a test-only job based on PTCS duct sealing specifications.

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

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

**Q: When duct sealing is required, can I also claim the duct sealing measure?**

A: No. The heat pump reimbursements that require duct sealing are higher than those that do not because they include the duct sealing measure.

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

A: The PTCS certified technician provides this verification as they identify all ductwork in a home, including those in the crawlspace and attic. This is also verified by the QA inspector.

**Q: What does it mean when the PTCS Specification requires that “all accessible ducts must be sealed”?**

A: If the technician can reach the ducts in an unconditioned space then the ducts shall be sealed.

**Q: 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?**

A: 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 provided should be considered.

Note: New weatherization specifications recently approved by the Regional Technical Forum require that ducts be sealed before insulation is added.

**Q: If the ducts are in a garage and built into soffits, are they considered accessible?**

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

**Q: How many inches of fiberglass are required to achieve an R-8 insulation value?**

A: One inch of fiberglass insulation that is not compressed and without gaps typically has an insulation value of R-3 so 2.7" of fiberglass provide an insulation value of R-8. The PTCS Air Source Heat Pump specification details requirements for duct insulation in section 6.2.

**Q: How would a contractor determine if existing rigid ductwork is uninsulated and require insulation to R-8, as required by Section 6.2.1.1. of the Air Source Heat Pump Specification?**

A: If a visual inspection for interior and exterior insulation finds that neither is present, the ductwork is considered uninsulated.

**Q: Why aren't all energy efficiency rebate/incentive applications the same?**

A: Individual utilities have different program requirements, and program offers are managed by the utility rather than at the regional level. We will continue to work toward more streamlined forms and processes as opportunities arise.

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

A: Contractors may call the homeowner's utility or the PTCS program directly; both can look in the PTCS database to determine if the ducts have previously been PTCS certified. The program is exploring ways that might allow a technician to access this information directly.

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

A: Please refer to the fact sheet regarding variable speed heat pumps. This can be found on the PTCS website or by emailing [smvasquez@bpa.gov](mailto:smvasquez@bpa.gov).

**Q: What happens if a technician or company does not return a signed participation agreement?**

A: The technician or company will not be able to submit jobs online and any jobs sent by fax will be set to pending until a signed participation agreement is on file for the technician and the technician's company. Having a signed participation agreement on file is required for submitting jobs for BPA reimbursement, but it is not required for PTCS Contractor Certification.

**Q: How will I know if my participation agreement has been received?**

A: This information can be found in the technician's online user account at [www.ptcsnw.com](http://www.ptcsnw.com).