



Navigating the NFRC Certification Program

Understanding the process, costs, and benefits

The process for obtaining NFRC Certified Energy Performance Ratings can appear confusing, especially for first timers. The purpose of this fact sheet is to explain how the program works and provide a guide to help simplify and streamline the various expenses involved. Remember, anything of value has a price. Please consider the program expense an investment in your product, on which your company will earn the following returns:

- **Credibility to your brand**, customer trust, and potentially increased sales.
- **Assurance of code compliance** – knowing that your product will be rated by the world's foremost expert in fenestration performance.
- **Fair competition** in the marketplace through uniform and consistent treatment – whether you are a national or small-market producer.

Process – By the Numbers

- 1) **Contact NFRC at 301-589-1776** (info@nfrc.org). Request a Certification Program Packet, which contains information about the program such as a list of accredited laboratories and IAs (Independent Certification and Inspection Agents), and an NFRC license agreement.
- 2) **Select an NFRC-licensed IA**. Your IA will guide you through the process (including labeling). IAs review laboratory reports, issue Certification Authorization Reports (CAR), and inspect manufacturing plants.
- 3) **Select an NFRC accredited simulator**. Your simulator will work with you to review your product catalog and determine the number of product lines to be rated (based on the requirements of NFRC standards, typically representing operator type, frame type, etc.). Remember to KEEP IT SIMPLE: The more product lines and individual options you choose to have modeled, the higher the costs. Once the specific product lines are identified, the simulator models the product(s) and determines their energy performance characteristics (U-factor, Solar Heat Gain Coefficient, Visible Transmittance, Air Leakage, Condensation Resistance).
- 4) **Send a randomly-selected product (base line product) to the accredited thermal test lab (one item for each product line)**. The test lab will validate the

U-factor rating from the accredited simulator. Please note there are allowances that will help you to group Product Lines and reduce the number of validation tests required. Be sure to work closely with NFRC staff approved thermal test labs, and licensed IAs. In addition, do not begin any testing program until your product matrix is established, because baseline products (the ones that need to be validated) vary in accordance with the products being simulated.

- 5) **Sign the NFRC License Agreement and complete applicable schedules to the agreement**. Return the signed agreement and completed schedules to the NFRC office. The agreement covers the authorized use of the NFRC name and logo on authorized products.
- 6) **Stand by while the test lab and simulation lab send copies of the reports to your IA**. Your IA will review the results and check the test sample specifications with the original drawings and specifications submitted to the simulator. Once the IA determines that the product meets NFRC requirements, they will issue you a CAR.
- 7) **Label those product(s) with an NFRC Label**. Products are certified for a four-year period. In addition, the certified products can be listed in NFRC's Certified Products Directory (CPD).

Questions? NFRC is here to support you.
Please contact us for additional information.

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NFRC administers an independent, uniform rating and labeling system for the energy performance of fenestration products, including windows, curtain walls, doors, and skylights. For more information on NFRC, please visit our Web site at www.nfrc.org or contact NFRC directly at 301-589-1776.

Program Costs

Participation costs vary from manufacturer to manufacturer and among the NFRC accredited agents. Here are some things to consider as you begin the process:

- Time is money – The more time it takes for inspections, testing, and simulation, the higher the anticipated costs. Keep your needs simple!
- Consider grouping options when available
- Shop around for the best value – request several bids before choosing an agent
- Work closely with your labs and IAs

IA Fees

IA costs vary among the agencies. Costs take into account how much information needs to be reviewed and how many product ratings need verification of laboratory reports, as well as the number of CARs issued and the annual cost for in-plant inspections. Depending on the number of products involved and the service provided, IA fees can range from \$500 - \$2,500 a year.

Simulation Lab Fees

Simulation lab costs vary from lab to lab. Costs take into account a review of the manufacturer's catalog, the number of product lines, and the complexity of the products. In addition, simulators provide the U-factor, SHGC, and VT ratings in accordance with NFRC standards for each product in the various product lines. These are the required ratings that appear on the NFRC labels. Accredited simulators typically charge between \$100 and \$1,000 for modeling the various product lines and developing a product matrix; and between \$50 and \$200 for modeling the various products within each product line. *Again, consider grouping products when allowable and do not model products that you do not make or that will not be labeled!*

Testing Fees

Thermal testing costs differ among the various test labs. A single thermal test may cost anywhere between \$600 and \$1,500. Also, remember that you only need validation tests for each product line. Using proper grouping techniques can reduce testing costs. Check with NFRC or an NFRC-licensed IA before conducting any testing. Changing your product matrix (simulation lab report) will affect the baseline product to be tested.

NFRC Participation Costs

The costs for participating in NFRC's certification program vary. Costs depend on the number of product lines to be certified, label usage, and membership status (NFRC is a non-profit membership organization; NFRC membership is separate and apart from participation in the NFRC Certification Program).

There are three NFRC fee categories:

Annual Participation Fees*

NFRC members: \$1,000
Non-Members: \$1,500

Label Fees*

\$0.01 per label (up to \$40,000)

Product Line Fees*

NFRC members: \$100 per product line (up to \$5,000)
Non-Members: \$150 per product line (up to \$7,500)

**Small Business Exemption (for both members and non-members)*

Manufacturers that gross less than \$2 million in sales per year qualify for a small business discount. These include:

- An annual participation fee of \$500
- No label fees
- Only \$50 per product line

Site-Built Program

Curtain wall and other site-built fenestration use label certificates in lieu of temporary labels. Manufactured fenestration products and systems may use the label certificate in lieu of temporary labels when specified for use in buildings more than three (3) stories above grade and with a minimum fenestration area of 930 square meters (10,000 square feet) that has been authorized for certification.

Participation Fees (per project) are assessed based on the square footage of fenestration product area authorized for certification and includes an unlimited number of Label Certificates for \$100.

Label Certificate Fees (per project)

Certified Site-Built Fenestration Area	
≤ 1,000 ft ²	\$20.00
≥ 1,000 to 10,000 ft ²	\$100.00
≥ 10,000 to 50,000 ft ²	\$250.00
≥ 50,000 to 100,000 ft ²	\$500.00
≥ 100,000 ft ²	\$1,000.00