

For Owners of a Single-Family (Residential) Home

The Energy Conservation Audit and Disclosure (ECAD) ordinance, Austin City Code Chapter 6-7, requires that before the sale of their home, owners of a single-family home must have an energy audit performed on the property. To see if your home needs an energy audit, [answer the questions in our online tool, the ECAD Audit Self Check](#).

If a home needs an audit, the seller must provide a copy of the audit to the purchaser or prospective purchaser. The auditor must provide a copy of the audit to Austin Energy.

Note: Austin Energy has conducted training sessions with many Austin area real estate brokers and agents. These real estate professionals can provide sellers with valuable additional guidance and information about the disclosure requirement and its operation.

Exemptions

Homes meeting any one of the following conditions do not need an audit, as allowable under Austin City Code Chapter 6-7. The home:

- Is less than 10 years old at the time of sale
- Has participated in the [Austin Energy Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® program](#), or an equivalent Austin Energy program not more than ten years before the time of sale and either received at least three energy efficiency improvements or a total of \$500 in rebates through Austin Energy residential energy efficiency programs. These improvements include:

increasing attic insulation to R38; installing solar screens, solar film, or low-E windows; adding radiant barriers in the attic; replacing or insulating ducts; reducing air infiltration and sealing ducts; and installing new qualifying HVAC systems.

- Has received energy-efficiency improvements through the [Austin Energy Free Home Improvements program](#) within 10 years before the sale.
(Austin Energy offers free home-energy improvements only to customers with low-to-moderate incomes.)
- Is a condominium
- Is manufactured housing (a mobile home) built on a permanent chassis and designed for use without a permanent foundation.
- Changes ownership and the transfer of the title occurs under one of the following:
 - Foreclosure sale, trustee's sale, or deed in lieu of foreclosure
 - Pre-foreclosure sale, in which the seller reached an agreement with the mortgage holder to sell the property for an amount less than the amount owed on the mortgage
 - Threat or exercise of eminent domain
 - Gift from one family member to another family member without consideration
 - Court order or probate proceedings
 - Decree of legal separation or dissolution of marriage or property settlement agreement incidental to such a decree

Variations

A home may receive a variance if it meets one of the following conditions:

- No later than six months after the sale, the buyer applies for a permit to demolish the home. The seller and buyer must enter into a binding agreement in which the buyer agrees to apply for a permit to demolish the home no later than six months after the sale. [View the Variance Application for Residence Demolition.](#)
- No later than six months after the sale, the buyer applies for a

permit to substantially remodel the home. The seller and buyer must enter into a binding agreement in which the buyer agrees to file an application for a building permit to substantially remodel the above-referenced property no later than six months after the sale and in which the buyer agrees to complete an energy audit within a specified time after the remodel is complete. [View the Variance Application for Residence Substantial Remodel](#).

- The buyer qualifies for and agrees to participate in the Austin Energy Free Weatherization Program or an equivalent Austin Energy program, no later than six months after the sale. [View the Agreement to Participate in the Austin Energy Free Weatherization Program](#).

To apply for a variance, [email](#) either the [the Variance Application for Residence Demolition](#) form or [the Variance Application for Residence Substantial Remodel](#) form, or print out the appropriate one and send it to:

Director of Energy Efficiency Services
Austin Energy
811 Barton Springs Road, 3rd Floor
Austin, TX 78704

Energy Efficiency Records

Austin Energy will provide homeowners or prospective buyers with information on the energy-efficiency improvements received by a home through Austin Energy programs. This information includes dates of energy-efficiency improvements or rebates, and dates and

details of free energy-efficiency improvements. Call 482-5346 or email Austin Energy with the address of the home and your telephone number.

ECAD Exemption List

Austin Energy also makes available to homeowners a useful ECAD Exemption List.

Single-Family Home Audit

If the home is not exempt or does not qualify for a variance, it needs an ECAD audit.

ECAD Auditors

The ECAD audit must be performed by an auditor who is a certified Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) Rater or a Building Performance Institute (BPI) Building Analyst Professional. See a list of certified ECAD auditors who have registered with Austin Energy.

What the Auditor Does

An ECAD audit takes about one hour per thousand square feet of property. The

ECAD auditor:

- Inspects and measures the attic insulation in multiple areas
- Pressure tests the duct system and assesses its condition and adequacy
- Examines heating and cooling equipment
- Inspects weather stripping around exterior doors, plumbing penetrations beneath sinks, and air tightness of attic entries
- Identifies and measures the amount of glass in windows that receive more than one hour of direct sunlight each day

Audit Costs

ECAD audits are comprehensive and require specialized equipment for testing the duct system. The estimated cost of an audit is from \$200 to \$300 for a typical single-family home, 1,800 square feet or smaller, with one air-conditioning system. Auditors set their own prices.

Audit Results

After the audit, the auditor provides the homeowner with the audit report. It includes:

- Condition and estimated R-value of the attic insulation
- Percentage of air leakage from the duct system and the system's general condition
- Age, efficiency, and overall condition of the heating and cooling

equipment

- Air leakage around exterior doors, plumbing penetrations beneath sinks, and attic entries
- Total square feet of glass and location of windows receiving more than one hour of direct sunlight each day
- Opportunities for improving the energy-efficiency of the home

Within 30 days, the auditor sends the audit to Austin Energy, and we enter the information into a database. Austin Energy also runs spot checks of ECAD audits to ensure the quality of the program.

Energy-Efficiency Improvements

The ECAD ordinance does not require homeowners to make energy-efficiency improvements. However, Austin Energy offers rebates and low-cost loans to homeowners who want to improve their home's energy efficiency.

Enforcement

Non-compliance with the ECAD ordinance, Austin City Code Chapter 6-7, is a Class C Misdemeanor. Reported violations will be forwarded to the City of Austin Legal Department for review and action.

Excerpted from *For Owners of a Single-Family (Residential) Home*

[http://www.austenergy.com/about us/environmental initiatives/ordinance/single-family.htm](http://www.austenergy.com/about%20us/environmental%20initiatives/ordinance/single-family.htm)

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