

**Western HVAC Performance Alliance**  
**Jurisdictional Survey of Online Permit System (OPS)**

**Respondent Information:**

- Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_
- Respondent's job title: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date survey completed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction:**

The WHPA (Western HVAC Performance Alliance<sup>1</sup>) is conducting an assessment among California's building department jurisdictions on user accessibility for online permitting systems (OPS). We request the feedback of your enforcement agency in this endeavor.

WHPA's objective is to assess the current status of individual jurisdictions OPS' and assess the viability of a statewide OPS. This assessment is primarily interested in OPS for the purposes of increasing permitting of heating ventilation and air conditioning HVAC (mechanical permits) commonly termed "changeouts". The WHPA has been tasked with gathering information as to whether an OPS will improve the efficiency and accessibility for both building department staff and applicants (i.e. contractors, residential customers) and increase the frequency as well as enhance code compliance.

The WHPA acknowledges your building department may already have an OPS that serves this purpose and that your department may have been surveyed recently with related questions by other entities. However, we need to emphasize the importance of your participation in this state-wide evaluation, which helps inform policy makers on the needs and use of an OPS. We thank you in advance for your thoughtful and accurate response.

**HVAC Changeout Definition:**

The assessment is considering two types of HVAC changeouts: (1) alterations that include new/replacement HVAC components and (2) alterations that include entirely new or replacement HVAC systems (that is, all HVAC equipment and ducts are new/replaced).

**Questions:**

**General Permit Application Systems:**

1. How are historical permit records currently stored?
  - a) Electronic files (e.g. database)
  - b) Hard copy (e.g. paper)

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<sup>1</sup> The Western HVAC Performance Alliance is an industry advisory group that involves stakeholders such as manufacturers, distributors, and contractors to coordinate industry sponsorship of and participation in California statewide HVAC energy efficiency strategies. The WHPA is funded by the California Investor Owned Utilities under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission. For more information, visit [www.performancealliance.org](http://www.performancealliance.org).

- c) Microfiche
- d) Multiple methods (describe)
- e) Other (describe)
- f) [Don't know]

2. Does your jurisdiction currently have an online permitting system? Yes/ If No, please skip to Question 4.

3. Which of the following online permit features does this jurisdiction currently offer?

[Check all that apply]

- a) Users may search for previously assigned permits
- b) Users may apply for certain types of permits online
- c) Users may check the status of a currently issued permit
- d) Users may download permit applications
- e) Users may obtain fee schedules for permits
- f) Users may pay permit fees online with a credit card
- g) Users may request an inspection
- h) Something else:

### No Online Permit System:

- 4. Does this jurisdiction plan to implement an "apply for online permit system" in the next 1 to 3 years? Yes/no/don't know/ If no, then ask why not?
- 5. If an "apply for permit system" was made available to the jurisdiction, do you expect personnel would fully embrace it? Yes or No. If no, please explain:

Then skip to: Integration with a statewide system

### Yes Online Permit System (OPS):

- 6. What year did the jurisdiction begin offering some form of online permitting as described in question 2?

### General OPS Functionality:

- 7. Which software application is used to **operate** the OPS? Please list the system name here: \_\_\_\_\_ /don't know/ N/A
- 8. How do you determine which site **addresses** on the permits are within your jurisdiction? Please describe the custom/third-party/don't know/ N/A database: \_\_\_\_\_

### OPS Functionality Pertaining to HVAC permits:

- 9. Can HVAC changeout permits be applied for using the OPS? Yes/no/don't know/ N/A
- 8a. Why are changeout permits not available through an online application process? Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_ /don't know/ N/A

10. What other type of permits, besides HVAC changeouts, can be applied using the OPS? Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_ /don't know/ N/A

### Impacts & User Experience:

11. Has the rate of permitting changed as a result of the OPS?  
Increased/decreased/unchanged/don't know

12. Has code compliance changed as a result of the OPS?  
Increased/decreased/unchanged/ don't know

13. Has permit fees changed as a result of the OPS?  
Increased/decreased/unchanged/don't know

14. How has building department staff responded to the OPS? Very positive response, positive, somewhat positive, not very positive, not at all positive, too soon to measure, don't know

15. How have users responded to the OPS? Very positive response, positive, somewhat positive, not very positive, not at all positive, too soon to measure, don't know

16. What challenges or barriers did the building department experience in the development and implementation of the online permit system? [Check all that apply]

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Payment claims and processing         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Costly                             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legal issues                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Effectiveness/Ineffectiveness      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integration of HERS compliance forms  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Over-the-counter (OTC) plan checks |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integration of HERS Provider registry | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electronic submittal plan checks   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resistance to use by (specify)        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____      |

16a. What benefits did the building department experience from the development and implementation of the online permitting system? List any in the space below:

### Integration with other systems:

17. Can a user submit the HERS compliance forms with the current OPS? Yes-No

*\*To learn more about HERS project documents and compliance, please complete the survey to access the supplemental information provided.*

18. Rate the following questions on a 1 to 5 scale where 1 represents not desirable and 5 represents very desirable

18a. Would the ability to integrate with the HERS Registries be a desired feature by staff or users? 1-2-3-4-5

18b. Would the ability to verify a contractor's license from the CSLB website be a desired feature by staff or users? 1-2-3-4-5

18c. Would the ability to look up requirements from a state code website be a desired feature by staff or users? 1-2-3-4-5

### **Integration with a statewide system:**

19. How desirable would it be if the State of California was to provide a statewide "apply for permit system" that could be redirected to this jurisdiction's website. Rate the following question on a 1 to 5 scale where 1 represents "not very desirable" and 5 represents "very desirable" 1-2-3-4-5 then ask: Why do you give this rating?
20. If a State of California "apply for permit system" was made available to the jurisdiction, what concerns would you have? Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

### **HVAC Changeout Information:**

21. Within the previous fiscal year (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016), has this jurisdiction issued any HVAC changeout permits? Yes/no/don't know
22. [If Q20 = Yes, then ask] From July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016, approximately how many changeout permits have been issued? : \_\_\_\_ / don't know
23. From July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016, what percent of the changeouts were residential vs. non-residential: \_\_\_\_\_% / don't know
24. From July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016, approximately how many changeouts, would you estimate, are installed without a permit? (A best estimate is fine) : \_\_\_\_\_ / don't know
25. The state's goal is for 90% of all HVAC installations to be permitted by 2020. What changes should the state make in order to increase the rate of permitting? Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_ / don't know/ N/A

### **Follow up (Optional):**

Your response to the following questions is optional.

26. Who at your building department should we speak with concerning a statewide apply for online permit system or any other questions related to this topic?
- ✓ Name:
  - ✓ Title:
  - ✓ Contact Information:
27. Please describe any other thoughts or concerns you have regarding this topic: (Text box)

*(To be shown at completion of survey as referenced in Question 17 above.)*

*\*Enforcement agencies can access the California Energy Commission's Project Status Report for residential compliance documents directly through the HERS (Home Energy Rating Systems) registries [HERE](#) <insert link>.*

*This provides enforcement agencies the opportunity, at their discretion, to verify the completion of the CF1R, CF2R, and CF3R documents online.*

*CalCERTS and CHEERS registries have this report available. CalCERTS and CHEERS contact information is provided below for information on account access:*

*CalCERTS  
1-877-437-7787  
[Tech@calcerts.com](mailto:Tech@calcerts.com)*

*CHEERS  
1-800-424-3377  
[adminsupport@cheers.org](mailto:adminsupport@cheers.org)*