



Choosing the Right NFRC Certification Path in 2026

Energy performance documentation has long been part of fenestration planning, but 2026 program updates make it important to confirm which certification route applies before evaluations, labeling, submittals or code review begin.

The National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC), the independent nonprofit certification body for the energy performance of windows, doors, and skylights, provides standardized ratings that help manufacturers, glazing contractors, architects, and project teams compare products, verify performance, and respond to code requirements.

For 2026, residential products continue through NFRC 700, while commercial products and custom applications follow NFRC 715 under NFRC's Commercial Energy Performance Certification Program.

Identifying the correct program early can help teams prepare required information, plan evaluations, and reduce documentation issues later in the project schedule.

Residential Products Follow NFRC 700

Residential fenestration products are certified through NFRC's Product Certification Program under NFRC 700.

"Choosing the right NFRC path early helps teams determine whether residential products follow NFRC 700 or commercial products and custom projects follow NFRC 715."

This applies to residential windows, doors, skylights, and related products that need certified energy performance ratings for homes and other applicable residential building types.

The NFRC 700 process uses computer simulation and physical testing to establish energy and related performance ratings. Computer modeling is used to determine ratings such as U-factor, solar heat gain coefficient, and visible transmittance. Physical testing is required to detect air leakage and validate simulations.



NFRC has also implemented the LEAFF methodology, which stands for Linear Energy Analysis for Fenestration. LEAFF uses a trendline approach for product certification and is tied to condensation index implementation. Product lines using LEAFF receive the full five-year life cycle prescribed in NFRC 700. NFRC's residential certification program evaluates U-factor, solar heat gain coefficient, visible transmittance, air leakage, and condensation index.

For manufacturers, this can support more consistent ratings across product options and provide additional information through condensation index reporting.

Commercial Products Follow NFRC 715

Commercial fenestration products are addressed through NFRC 715, the Commercial Energy Performance Certification Program: Products & Projects. NFRC offers paths for mass-produced products and uniquely engineered systems, supporting standard product certification and custom project applications.

The standard product path is used for commercial product lines that may be used across multiple projects. This option supports repeatable commercial systems and allows manufacturers to pursue certification for broader use.

The custom path is designed for job-specific commercial conditions. NFRC describes this route as an option for non-standard assemblies that are not feasible to test physically when designing a unique fenestration system for a specific building. This can be helpful for custom curtain wall, storefront, window wall or mixed fenestration assemblies that do not fit a standard product-line model.

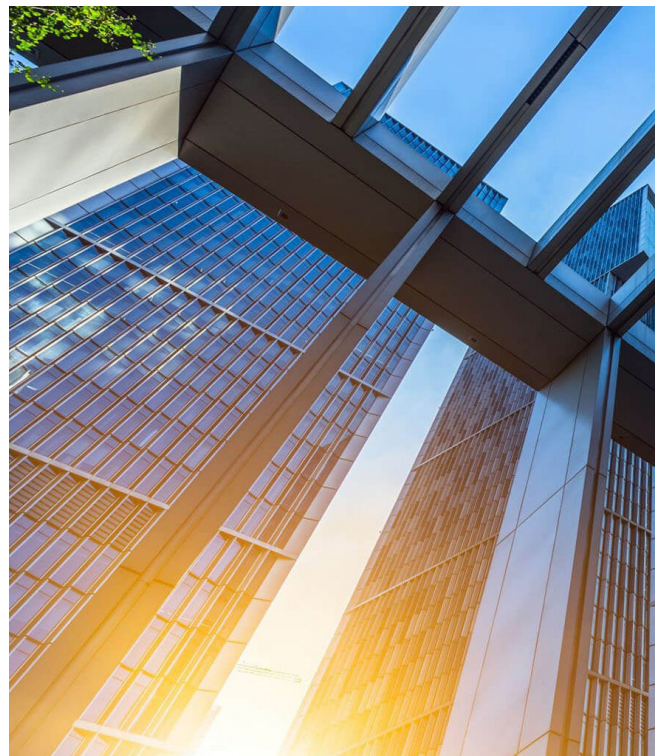
Where Project Certification Can Help

Project certification under NFRC 715 may be useful for custom commercial projects, especially when a one-off fenestration system is tied to a specific building rather

than a repeatable product line. Because the Custom Project Path is project-specific and the certificate cannot be reused, physical validation is not required under this path.

This allows teams to rate building-specific configurations, including custom assemblies, unique dimensions, and mixed product types within the same area. Under the Custom Project Path, products are rated for U-factor, solar heat gain coefficient, and visible transmittance. Condensation index ratings may be included if applicable to the product. Air leakage is not rated under this path.

This approach can support offices, hotels, hospitals, high-rise residential buildings, and other commercial projects where the installed fenestration may be unique to the building. A commercial label certificate provides ratings for fenestration products installed on a commercial building and can support code documentation when NFRC-certified ratings are required.





Choosing the Right Certification Path

The right path depends on the product, building type and how the rating will be used.

NFRC 700

Best suited for:

Residential product lines

Key consideration

Uses simulation and physical testing within the Product Certification Program.

NFRC 715 - STANDARD PRODUCT PATH

Best suited for

Commercial product lines used across multiple projects

Key consideration

Supports repeatable commercial systems that need broader certification.

NFRC 715 - CUSTOM PROJECT PATH

Best suited for

One-off commercial projects with custom configurations

Key consideration

Tied to a specific project and building address.

PROJECT CERTIFICATION

Best suited for

Custom commercial buildings requiring a label certificate

Key consideration

Documents installed, building-specific performance.

Gathering information early can help determine which path applies. Useful details may include the product type, building type, project address, framing system, glazing makeup, operable and fixed configurations, performance goals, applicable specifications, and label certificate needs.

How Intertek Can Help

Intertek supports fenestration manufacturers and project teams with testing and certification services tied to NFRC procedures, including **ANSI/NFRC 100** for U-factor and **ANSI/NFRC 200** for solar heat gain coefficient and visible transmittance. These standards apply to residential and commercial fenestration products, including windows, doors, skylights, and curtain walls.

As the NFRC process changes, Intertek can help clients understand which program applies, identify required information, support simulations and testing where required, and assist with documentation for certification and labeling.

For manufacturers with residential product lines, commercial standard systems or custom commercial projects, the first step is determining whether the product should follow NFRC 700, NFRC 715 standard product certification or NFRC 715 project certification. From there, Intertek can help support the process so products and projects have the documentation needed for code review, specification support, and market acceptance.

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