

# Managing impacts of COVID-19 on NABERS ratings v2.0

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# 1 Purpose

Assessors and building owners have raised questions with the NABERS National Administrator (NABERS) and the Commercial Building Disclosure program (CBD) about the impacts of COVID-19 on NABERS ratings.

This document answers questions, provides clarifications and presents four time-bound Rulings regarding these impacts. The answers and Rulings have been put into the same document for ease of use by Assessors.

NABERS will continue to monitor the changing circumstances brought on by the spread of COVID-19 and may extend these Rulings and/or provide further Rulings as the situation unfolds.

**V2.0** Major changes to content have been highlighted in a blue box located under their respective subheading.



In this document, important requirements and instructions are highlighted by an attention call-box.

## 2 Use of clarifications and Rulings in this document

Assessors do not need to seek prior written approval if they are using the Clarifications and FAQs included in Section 3 of this document.



Assessors wishing to use Rulings in this document (Sections 4, 5, 6 and 7) must receive prior written approval from NABERS. Please refer to individual Rulings for further details.

NABERS aims to provide all approvals within a timely manner and will work to reduce and/or eliminate the need for prior approval.

Where a Ruling has been used to complete a rating, Assessors must download a copy of this document and keep it with their rating documentation to justify the version that was used.

NABERS will also keep superseded versions of this document online for reference.

If Assessors are unsure how to apply the clarifications or Rulings, they must contact NABERS at [nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au).

## 3 Clarifications and FAQs

### 3.1 Can I get an exemption from my CBD obligations if my building is impacted by COVID-19?

NABERS provides Rulings on whether buildings are eligible for a NABERS rating with the data that is available. Buildings to date continue to be certified across Australia. If you believe the building you are working on has a unique situation which means that it cannot be rated, please contact NABERS at [nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au).

Questions around Building Energy Efficiency Disclosure (BEED) Compliance and exemptions should be directed to the CBD program, and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Please refer to the section on 'Business continuity' on the [CBD website](#).

### 3.2 Does NABERS require the same evidence if the building is impacted by COVID-19?

Aside from the exceptions listed in the following Rulings, the same evidence requirements as per the respective Rules remain in place for NABERS ratings.

The Assessor remains responsible for the accuracy of their rating and must collect and retain the required documentation as per the Rules and provide this documentation for a Level 2 audit if required.

If an Assessor is uncertain of the correct approach, they should contact NABERS prior to submission.

### 3.3 What should I do if an Assessor cannot conduct a site visit due to travel restrictions, illness or quarantine?

#### 3.3.1 Use of another Assessor

Generally, the Rules for NABERS ratings allow for another Assessor accredited in the same rating type to conduct a site visit or spot measurement (see Table 1).

This option should be used where possible. Documentation surrounding this option must be kept and provided for audits where required.

**Table 1: Use of another accredited Assessor for NABERS ratings**

Rating Type	Section in the Rules	Extract from the Rules
Energy and Water for Offices (v4.0)	Section 3.4 <i>Site visits</i>	<i>If the Assessor cannot conduct the site visit, they may only delegate this task to another Assessor accredited specifically for offices.</i>
Energy for Data Centres (v1.1)  Energy and Water for Hotels (v3.2)  Energy and Water for Shopping Centres (v3.0)	Section 2.8 <i>Site inspection</i>	<i>If the Assessor cannot physically conduct the site inspection, they may delegate this task to another Assessor.</i>
Energy and Water for Apartment Buildings (v1.1)	Section 4.6 <i>Site visit</i>	<i>If the Assessor cannot conduct the site visit, they may delegate this task to another Assessor accredited specifically for Apartment Buildings.</i>
Indoor Environment for Offices (v1.0)	Section 5.2 <i>Site inspection</i>	<i>NABERS IE rating. The Assessor may delegate this task to another Assessor, who is also accredited for NABERS IE if they cannot physically conduct the site inspection.</i>

### 3.3.2 Waste ratings

For Waste Ratings, the Rules do not specifically outline that another Assessor can conduct site visits and audits. However, it is implied that any accredited Assessor can conduct a site visit as Section 3.2 of *NABERS Rules – Waste v1.2* simply states ‘A NABERS Accredited Assessor must conduct a site visit’.

### 3.3.3 Indoor Environment ratings – Sub-contracting for on-site measurements

In addition to permitting another Assessor accredited in Indoor Environment ratings to conduct spot measurements, Section 5.2.1 of the *Indoor Environment for Offices Rules (v1.0)* also allows for on-site spot measurements to be made by ‘...a qualified Engineer or Indoor Environment Professional, with certification of qualifications’.

Further guidance on who could be subcontracted to undertake spot measurements can be found in Section 7.2.2 of this Ruling. Examples could include: appropriately certified and accredited sustainability engineers, IEQ engineers, occupational hygienists and HVAC engineers.

## 3.4 What should I do if a site visit cannot be conducted due to the impacts of COVID-19?

### 3.4.1 Energy, Water and Carbon Neutral ratings

**V2.0** Extended validity of Ruling from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

In this situation, Assessors must refer to Section 4 *Ruling #1: Managing the impacts of COVID-19 on-site visits for NABERS Energy, Water and Carbon Neutral ratings (valid until to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020)*.



NABERS may extend the validity of this Ruling, as well as the inclusion of additional provisions as the situation progresses.

NABERS will likely consider a transition period at the end of the government-mandated shutdown period.

### 3.4.2 Waste ratings

**V2.0** Extended validity of Ruling from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

Under the current Waste Rules, Waste ratings can occur without a site visit being conducted. In such cases, the rating is assigned the “basic quality” metric for the waste data.

The Waste Rules also allow for a non-Assessor to conduct a contamination audit under the supervision of an Accredited Assessor.

For the period between the release of this Ruling and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, NABERS will allow this supervision to be conducted virtually. This is included in Section 5 *Ruling #2: Managing the impacts of COVID-19 on contamination audits for NABERS Waste ratings (valid until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020)*.

For further guidance, please contact the NABERS team.

### 3.4.3 Indoor Environment ratings

When spot measurements cannot be taken due to a building lockdown, an Indoor Environment rating cannot be undertaken until such time as the building is accessible again.

## 3.5 How should Computer Counts and Tenancy Occupancy Surveys be conducted if the tenancies have very low occupancy due to COVID-19?

**V2.0** Extended validity of Ruling from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

In this situation, Assessors must refer to Section 6 *Ruling #3: Managing the impacts of COVID-19 on Tenant Occupancy Surveys and Computer Count for NABERS Energy for Office ratings (valid until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020)*.



NABERS may extending the validity of this Ruling, as well as the inclusion of additional provisions as the situation progresses.

NABERS will likely consider a transition period at the end of the government-mandated shutdown period.

Assessors should note that these provisions also apply to Whole Building and Tenancy ratings in co-assess applications.

### 3.6 How will NABERS treat a period of building shutdown for office ratings?

NABERS is still able to provide Energy and Water ratings for office buildings during shutdown periods.

The NABERS Rules already include provisions that can capture low-occupancy, short-term situations (such as quarantines or shutdowns). NABERS will continue to monitor the situation and receive advice from health authorities; and the guidance contained in this document will be updated following stakeholder consultation.

NABERS welcomes any questions or concerns raised by its stakeholders during this rapidly evolving situation.



NABERS will review the impact of the low occupancy and building shutdown on rating results as the situation progresses.

### 3.7 What do I do if I have a commitment agreement?

If your site is affected by a commitment agreement, please contact the NABERS team at [nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au).

### 3.8 Can I get pre-approval for a portfolio of buildings where I am following the same method of compliance?

Yes, this is possible. Please contact the NABERS team at [nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au) for further information.

# 4 Ruling #0: Temporary extension of lodgement period and moratorium on use of data impacted by the COVID-19 affected period

**V2.0** Ruling #0 is a new addition to the *Managing impacts of COVID-19 on NABERS Ratings*.

## 4.1 Introduction & Scope

This Ruling incorporates Proposal #2 set out in the *Managing Impacts of COVID-19 on NABERS Ratings – Consultation Paper* (published April 2020) and is intended for all NABERS Energy, Water, Indoor Environment and Carbon Neutral ratings impacted by the COVID-19 affected period (currently defined as **23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**).

This Ruling is only valid until **30<sup>th</sup> June 2020** and is intended to provide an interim measure until a longer-term solution is found. NABERS will consider extending the validity of this Ruling, as well as the inclusion of additional provisions, as the situation progresses.

As this Ruling applies to all ratings, approval to use this Ruling is not required. If a rating cannot be conducted because of this Ruling, the Assessor should contact NABERS.

**Note:** This Ruling may affect a rating's Building Energy Efficiency Certificate (BEEC) eligibility. Questions regarding Building Energy Efficiency Disclosure (BEED) compliance and exemptions should be directed to the CBD program.

## 4.2 Moratorium on use of data impacted by the COVID-19 affected period

### 4.2.1 General

For the period during which this Ruling is valid, NABERS will place a moratorium on the use of the following data collected during the COVID-19 affected period (**23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**):

- a) Energy and water consumption data;
- b) Temperature data used for annual monitoring.

This means that Assessors must not use data from the affected period as part of a rating application.

Assessors must still provide 12 months of continuous data as part of a rating application. To reach 12 months of data, it is permissible to reuse data from the previous rating period (see example below).

**Example:**

Rating period for the previous rating:

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2018 to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019

Rating period for the current application:

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019 to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020

Period of reused data:

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019 to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019

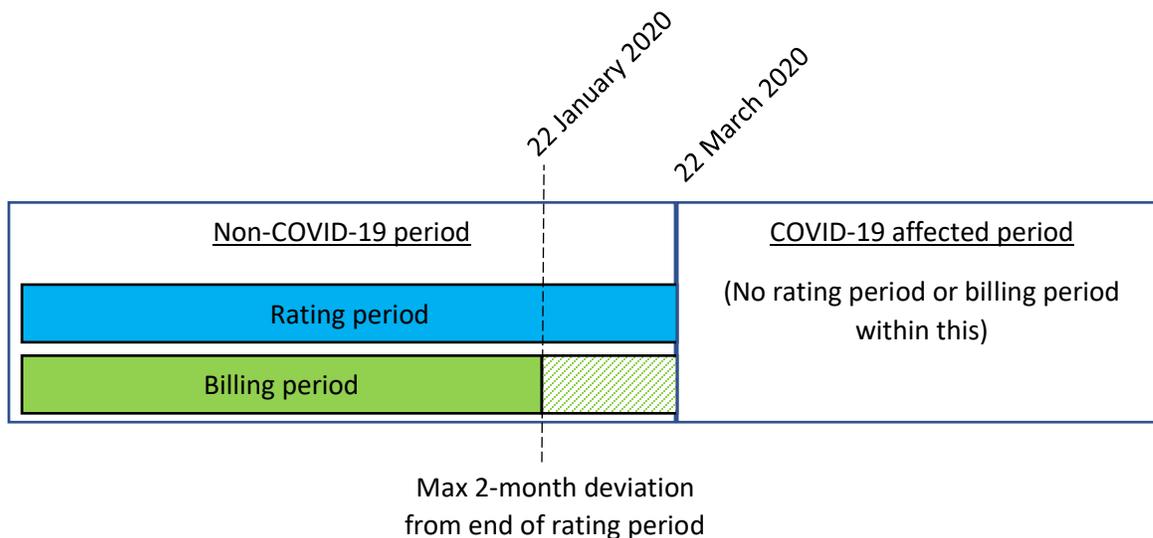
### 4.2.2 Rating period & billing period

For the period during which this ruling is valid, a rating application’s—

- rating period must end on or before 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020, and
- billing period must also end on or before 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020.

It is a NABERS requirement that the billing period is aligned as closely as possible with the rating period. Where there is a deviation between the billing period and the rating period (see Figure 1 below), the deviation of the billing period—

- must not be greater than 2 months from the rating period, and
- must not overlap with the COVID-19 affected period.



**Figure 1: Rating period & billing period dates**

### 4.2.3 Use of bills

A utility bill's coverage dates may partially overlap with the COVID-19 affected period. Use of such utility bills is permissible if the requirements in Section 4.2.2 above are met as the NABERS rating input form will automatically apportion the bill's consumption data.

### 4.2.4 Use of manual meter reads

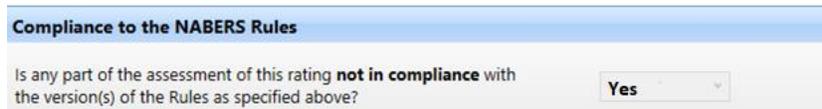
If a building cannot undertake a rating due to manual meter reads in the COVID-19 affected period then the Assessor should first contact NABERS. Where required for BEEC implications, the Assessor should then contact the CBD program.

### 4.2.5 Entry into NABERS Rate or the NABERS for Apartment Buildings Platform

When submitting a rating using this Ruling, please select:

- "Yes" to the question under "*Compliance with the NABERS Rules*" and fill out the text box with the date that approval to use the Ruling was granted by the NABERS team.

See Figure 2 below.



**Compliance to the NABERS Rules**

Is any part of the assessment of this rating **not in compliance** with the version(s) of the Rules as specified above?

Figure 2

### 4.2.6 Exemptions from this Ruling

There may be situations where an Assessor wishes to use data from the COVID-19 affected period for a rating application. Such situations could include the following:

- The data is not dependent on occupation levels; or
- The occupation levels in the building have not changed.

An exemption from this Ruling can be requested in the situations above if evidence of why an exemption is needed can be provided.



Exemptions to Ruling #0 require prior written approval from the National Administrator. NABERS will review each request on a case-by-case basis and will grant exemptions at their discretion.

## 4.3 Temporary extension of rating lodgement period

### 4.3.1 Lodgement period

For the period during which this Ruling is valid, NABERS will grant an extension of the rating lodgement period from 120 days to **180 days**.

This Ruling will not be applied retrospectively to ratings which have been created and lodged with NABERS prior to the publication of this version (v2.0) of the Ruling.

**Note:** For ratings using a rating period ending on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020, this will effectively mean the lodgement deadline will be extended from 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 to **18<sup>th</sup> September 2020**.

### 4.3.2 Worked examples

To help Assessors understand how the extension to submission dates will work, examples have been given in Table 1 below.

**Table 2**

#	Rating Period	Submission deadline	Application submitted	Certification date	Certificate Validity Period	Remarks
1	23 Mar 2019 to 22 Mar 2020	18 Sep 2020	8 Sep 2020	14 Sep 2020	14 Sep 2020 to 13 Sep 2021	Submitted within 180-day period
2	19 Mar 2019 to 18 Mar 2020	13 Sep 2020	13 Jul 2020	20 Jul 2020	20 Jul 2020 to 19 Jul 2021	Submitted within 180-day period
3	23 Mar 2019 to 22 Mar 2020	18 Sep 2020	28 Sep 2020	5 Oct 2020	22 Mar 2020 to 21 Mar 2021	Earlier certificate validity period due to submission after deadline

# 5 Ruling #1: Managing impacts of COVID-19 on site visits for NABERS Energy, Water and Carbon Neutral ratings (valid until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020)

**V2.0** Extended Ruling validity from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

## 5.1 Use of this Ruling

### 5.1.1 General

This Ruling is to be used for NABERS Energy, Water and/or Carbon Neutral ratings where a site visit was proposed for the period between **1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**, and the site visit cannot be conducted due to the following:

- Another Assessor cannot be used due to availability; or
- The risk of the site visit is deemed to be too high by an Assessor's organisation; or
- The building is in lock-down and access to the building is limited; or
- The proposed site visit was to be conducted during the government mandated shutdown of non-essential businesses, starting March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020.

This Ruling is not available for Indoor Environment and Waste ratings.

This Ruling is only valid until **30<sup>th</sup> June 2020** and is intended to provide additional flexibility around the Rules. NABERS will consider extending the validity of this Ruling, as well as the inclusion of additional provisions, as the situation progresses.



This Ruling can only be used with prior written approval from NABERS on a case-by-case basis and its use is at the discretion of NABERS.

### 5.1.2 Entry into NABERS Rate or the NABERS for Apartment Buildings Platform

When submitting a rating using this Ruling, please select:

- “Yes” to the question under “*Compliance with the NABERS Rules*” and fill out the text box with the date that approval to use the Ruling was granted by the NABERS team; and
- “No” to the question under “*Mandatory Site Inspections*” and fill out the text box with the version number of the Ruling and method(s) used.

See Figure 3 below.

Compliance to the NABERS Rules	
Is any part of the assessment of this rating <b>not in compliance</b> with the version(s) of the Rules as specified above?	Yes
Mandatory Site Inspection	
Did you personally conduct a site inspection of the entire rated premises for this rating as per the Rules?	No
If the site inspection was only partly completed, some of the functional spaces were not accessible or the site visit was not performed at all by the assessor of this rating, then select 'No' on the drop down list and fully describe the reasons why.	

Figure 3

## 5.2 Methods in lieu of a site visit

### 5.2.1 General

For the period during which this Ruling is valid, NABERS will allow Energy, Water and Carbon Neutral ratings to be lodged through one of the methods prescribed in Sections 5.2.2 to 5.2.4 of this Ruling.

The following criteria apply to all methods prescribed under this Section (5.2), and must be satisfied:

- The Assessor has been granted written approval from NABERS via email prior to lodgement. When seeking this approval, Assessors must provide:
  - For Method 1 – Written evidence of their proposed site visit date; or
  - For Method 2 – Proposed strategy for use of non-Assessor information from a site visit and why the Assessor is unable to use a prior site visit; or
  - For Method 3 – Proposed strategy for use of conservative inputs and why the Assessor is unable to use a prior site visit or non-Assessor information from a site visit.
- The Assessor is able to provide evidence that the site visit would have occurred between **1st March 2020 and 30th June 2020**; and
- Evidence has been collected to demonstrate that either:
  - Another Assessor is not available; or
  - The Assessor is not able to access the site because the risk of a site visit has been deemed to be too high by an Assessor or Assessor organisation; or
  - The building is in lock-down and access to the building has been limited; or
  - The proposed site visit was to be conducted during the government mandated shutdown of non-essential businesses, starting March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020.

For evidence and documentation requirements, see Section 5.3 of this Ruling.

### 5.2.2 Method 1 – Use of a prior site visit

To use Method 1, Assessors must demonstrate they meet the criteria of Section 5.2.1 of this Ruling, and provide the following:

- Evidence that the Assessor undertook the prior site visit themselves or is able to obtain a detailed briefing with notes and photos from a previous Assessor; and
- Evidence that the prior site visit relates to the most recent rating and was within the last three years; and
- A proposed strategy to confirm building usage data (such as hours and computer count), as well as any other changes that have occurred from the previous site visit that might impact the rating.

The Assessor must have enough compliant information to conduct the rating in accordance with the Rules.

If all of the conditions above cannot be met, a prior site visit cannot be used.

For evidence and documentation requirements, see Section 5.3 of this Ruling.

### 5.2.3 Method 2 – Use of non-Assessor information from a site visit, where a prior site visit cannot be used or is not available

To use Method 2, Assessors must demonstrate they meet the criteria of Section 5.2.1 of this Ruling, and provide the following:

- Evidence that the non-Assessor used for the site visit is familiar with the operation of the building (building or facility managers are preferred non-Assessors); and
- A proposed strategy to conduct the site visit and confirm the information gathered from the non-Assessor.

The Assessor must have enough compliant information to conduct the rating in accordance with the Rules.

If all of the conditions above cannot be met, information from a non-Assessor cannot be used.

For evidence and documentation requirements, see Section 5.3 of this Ruling.

**Note:** NABERS strongly encourages the use of virtual technology to conduct a site visit through a non-Assessor (for example, a video-call walk through with a facilities manager). The video can then be retained for Level 2 audits.

### 5.2.4 Method 3 – Use of conservative inputs where a building or tenancy is in lock-down for access due to COVID-19

To use Method 3, Assessors must demonstrate they meet the criteria of Section 5.2.1 of this Ruling, and provide the following:

- Evidence that information from a non-Assessor cannot be used or is not available; and

- Evidence that:
  - The building is in lock-down for access due to COVID-19; or
  - The site visit was to be conducted during the government-mandated shutdown of non-essential business, starting 23rd March 2020; and
- Confirmation that they are able to make conservative allowances for the relevant rating inputs.

If all of the conditions above cannot be met, conservative inputs cannot be used and the rating cannot proceed. If this is the case, the Assessor should contact NABERS for confirmation.

For evidence and documentation requirements, see Section 5.3 of this Ruling.

**Example:** Conservative allowances could include the use of default values for computer counts or deeming all car parks to be naturally ventilated in Apartment Building or Shopping Centre ratings.

**Note:** Assessors may refer to Ruling #3 for alternative evidence for computer counts.

## 5.3 Evidence and documentation requirements

Assessors must provide evidence to demonstrate they meet the criteria under Section 5.2.1 of this Ruling. The evidence should look to eliminate any doubt behind the Assessor's eligibility to use the respective Ruling and may be demonstrated by a combination of evidence types.

All evidence provided is subject to NABERS' approval and may include (but is not limited to):

- Calendar invites (time-stamped), including their recipients;
- Site visit/travel itinerary for NABERS ratings;
- Written correspondence between Assessors and client/site team/building owner, etc.;
- Travel and accommodation bookings;
- Raised work order(s) or invoice(s), letters of engagement;
- Internal stakeholder communication advising of work-related travel restrictions;
- Previous site visit notes.

In principle, the evidence should demonstrate:

- The parties involved (i.e. the Assessor/Assessor organisation, the client, site management team, etc.);
- Communication has been established between parties, concerning the draft rating;
- Key dates (scheduled site visits, rating periods, rating expiry dates, etc.).

In general, the NABERS team will not accept the following:

- Absence of supporting evidence or attachments;

- Illegible screenshots or snapshots;
- Word documents or other editable documents.

Assessors remain responsible for the accuracy of their ratings and must collect and retain all documentation as per the Rules, including any information gathered as part of this Ruling. This must be provided for Level 2 auditing, if required.

NABERS reserves the right to refuse requests on the grounds of inadequate or insufficient evidence.

If an Assessor is uncertain of the evidence type, they should contact NABERS in advance.

# 6 Ruling #2: Managing the impacts of COVID-19 on site visits for NABERS Waste ratings (valid until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020)

**V2.0** Extended validity of Ruling from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

For ratings that were due to undergo a contamination audit between the release date of this Ruling and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, NABERS will allow an Accredited Assessor to supervise a contamination audit conducted by a non-Assessor virtually.

Assessors must retain evidence proving that the contamination audit would have occurred between the release date of this Ruling and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

No prior approval is required to use this Ruling.

# 7 Ruling #3: Managing the impacts of COVID-19 on TOS and Computer Count for NABERS Energy for Office Whole Building and Tenancy ratings (valid until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020)

**V2.0** Extended validity of Ruling from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

## 7.1 Use of this Ruling

### 7.1.1 General

This Ruling is to be used for NABERS Energy for Office Whole Building and Tenancy ratings in the following circumstances:

- A building or tenancy has very low occupancy and this is directly due to COVID-19; and
- The Computer Count or Tenant Occupancy Survey has or would have occurred between **1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**; and
- There is evidence that this period of very low occupancy has impacted the ability of the Computer Counts and Tenancy Occupancy Surveys to accurately represent the rating period.

This Ruling is only valid until **30<sup>th</sup> June 2020** and is intended to provide additional flexibility around the Rules. NABERS will consider extending the validity of this Ruling, as well as the inclusion of additional provisions, as the situation progresses.



This Ruling can only be used with prior written approval from NABERS on a case-by-case basis and its use is at the discretion of NABERS.

### 7.1.2 Entry into NABERS Rate or the NABERS for Apartment Buildings Platform

When submitting a rating using this Ruling, please select:

- “Yes” to the question under “*Compliance with the NABERS Rules*” and fill out the text box with the Ruling version number and date that approval to use the Ruling was granted by the NABERS team.

See Figure 4 below.



**Compliance to the NABERS Rules**

Is any part of the assessment of this rating **not in compliance** with the version(s) of the Rules as specified above?

Figure 4

## 7.2 Methods for low occupancy or heavily vacated buildings

### 7.2.1 General

For the period during which this Ruling is valid, NABERS will allow Whole Building and Tenancy ratings to be lodged using the methods prescribed in Sections 7.2.2 to 7.2.3 of this Ruling.

The following criteria apply to all methods prescribed under this Section (7.2) and must be satisfied:

- Evidence of very low occupancy in the building and that this is directly related to COVID-19; and
- Evidence that the Computer Count or Tenant Occupancy Survey has or would have occurred between **1st March 2020 and 30th June 2020**.

For evidence and documentation requirements, see Section 7.3 of this Ruling.

**Note:** Evidence of very low occupancy can be confirmed by the tenant or building owner. It must be clear that the space has not been vacated for any other reason.

### 7.2.2 Method 4 – Computer Counts where buildings have low occupancy due to COVID-19

To use Method 4, Assessors must demonstrate they meet the criteria in Section 7.2.1 of this Ruling, and provide the following:

- Evidence that the default value for Computer Count is not appropriate for use; and
- Evidence as to why conducting a standard Computer Count in line with the NABERS Rules is not appropriate; and
- Propose an alternative methodology or evidence of the number of computers.

The use of this Ruling is at the discretion of NABERS and will depend on the robustness of the alternative method proposed by the Assessor. NABERS will assess whether the alternative evidence for Computer Count provides a fair representation of the number of computers in the rated period.

If all of the conditions above cannot be met, this method for Computer Count cannot be used.

For evidence and documentation requirements, see Section 7.3 of this Ruling.

**Note 1:** Evidence of why the default computer count is not appropriate could include evidence of an unreasonable impact on the star rating.

**Note 2:** Alternative evidence of the number of computers could include a combination of:

- Computer count from the previous rating;
- Photos or video from a virtual site tour;
- Confirmation from the tenant that the figures for this rated period are similar; and/or
- Office floor plans or recent furniture audits.

### 7.2.3 Method 5 – Use of Tenant Occupancy Surveys where buildings have been heavily vacated due to COVID-19

To use Method 5, Assessors must demonstrate they meet the criteria in Section 7.2.1 of this Ruling, and provide the following:

- Evidence that a valid OTA is available; and
- Evidence that shows:
  - Current occupancy patterns are not representative of the rated hours; or
  - A valid TOS could not be sourced due to occupancy failing to meet the required minimum 20 % occupancy threshold.

If the conditions above are met, NABERS will allow Energy for Whole Building and Tenancy ratings to be lodged using the following, in lieu of a Tenant Occupancy Survey:

- **OTA Hours minus 5** – see *NABERS Energy and Water for Offices – Rules (v4.0)*: Section 4.3.1, Step 4 “OTA Hours correction for Tenancy and Whole building ratings.”

If all of the conditions above cannot be met, this Ruling cannot be used.

For evidence and documentation requirements, see Section 7.3 of this Ruling.

## 7.3 Evidence and documentation requirements

Assessors must provide evidence to demonstrate they meet the criteria under Section 7.2 of this Ruling. The evidence should eliminate any doubt in relation to the Assessor’s eligibility to use the respective Ruling. A combination of evidence types may be given.

Evidence used under Ruling #1 may also be used to demonstrate eligibility under Ruling #3.

All evidence provided is subject to NABERS’ approval and may include (but is not limited to):

- Written correspondence between Assessors and client/site team/building owner, etc.;
- Photos and video recordings, including recordings from virtual site tours;
- Office floor plans;
- Reverse calculator data inputs and star rating results;
- Previous site visit notes.

In general, the NABERS team will not accept the following:

- Absence of supporting evidence or attachments;
- Illegible screenshots or snapshots;
- Word documents or other editable documents.

Assessors remain responsible for the accuracy of their ratings and must collect and retain all documentation as per the Rules, including any information gathered as part of this Ruling. This must be provided for Level 2 auditing, if required.

NABERS reserves the right to refuse requests on the grounds of inadequate or insufficient evidence.

If an Assessor is uncertain of the evidence type, they should contact NABERS in advance.

# 8 Ruling #4: Managing impacts of COVID-19 on spot measurements for NABERS Indoor Environment ratings (valid until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020)

**V2.0** Extended validity of Ruling from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

## 8.1 Use of this Ruling

### 8.1.1 General

This Ruling is to be used for NABERS Indoor Environment ratings where:

- A building or tenancy has very low occupancy due to COVID-19; or
- A spot measurement was proposed for the period between **1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**, and the spot measurement cannot be conducted due to the following:
  - Another accredited Assessor cannot be engaged due to availability; or
  - The risk of the site visit is deemed to be too high by an accredited Assessor or Assessor organisation; or
  - The building is in lock-down, and access to the building has been limited; or
  - The visit was to be conducted during the government mandated shutdown of non-essential business, starting on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

This Ruling is only valid until **30<sup>th</sup> June 2020** and is intended to provide additional flexibility around The Rules. NABERS will consider extending the validity of this Ruling, as well as the inclusion of additional provisions, as the situation progresses.

Where access cannot be obtained for a spot measurement, Assessors should delay the application for an Indoor Environment rating until access is granted to the premises.



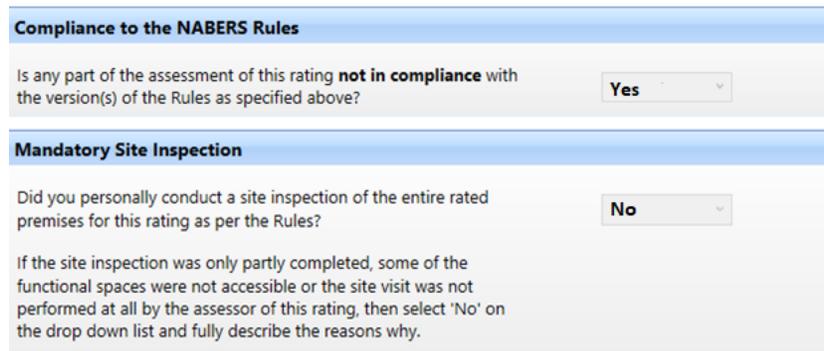
This Ruling can only be used with prior written approval from NABERS on a case-by-case basis and its use is at the discretion of NABERS.

### 8.1.2 Entry into NABERS Rate or the NABERS for Apartment Buildings Platform

When submitting a rating using this Ruling, please select:

- “Yes” to the question under “*Compliance with the NABERS Rules*” and fill out the text box with the Ruling version number and date that approval to use the Ruling was granted by the NABERS team.
- (If applicable) “No” to the question under “*Mandatory Site Inspections*” and fill out the text box with the version number of the Ruling and method(s) used.

See Figure 5 below.



**Compliance to the NABERS Rules**

Is any part of the assessment of this rating **not in compliance** with the version(s) of the Rules as specified above?

---

**Mandatory Site Inspection**

Did you personally conduct a site inspection of the entire rated premises for this rating as per the Rules?

If the site inspection was only partly completed, some of the functional spaces were not accessible or the site visit was not performed at all by the assessor of this rating, then select 'No' on the drop down list and fully describe the reasons why.

Figure 5

## 8.2 Methods for Indoor Environment ratings impacted by COVID-19

### 8.2.1 General

For the period during which this Ruling is valid, NABERS will allow Indoor Environment ratings to be lodged using the methods prescribed in Sections 8.2.3 to 8.2.4 of this Ruling.

The following criteria apply to all methods prescribed under Section 8.2 of this Ruling and must be satisfied:

- Evidence of very low occupancy in the building and that this is directly related to COVID-19; and
- Evidence that the spot measurement has or would have occurred between **1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**.

For evidence and documentation requirements, see Section 5.3 of Ruling #1 and Section 8.3 of this Ruling.

### 8.2.2 Method 6 – Use of a non-Assessor to undertake spot measurements for a site visit

Under this method, NABERS may allow Indoor Environment ratings to be lodged using spot measurements and evidence from a suitable non-Assessor.

Examples of suitable non-Assessors include qualified engineers or indoor environment professionals with any of the following certifications or qualifications:

- Certified Air Quality Professional (CAQP) | CASANZ

- Council-Certified Indoor Environmentalist (CIE/C) | IAQA
- Certified Occupational Hygienist (COG) | AIOH
- Engineer listed in the National Engineering Register (NERG) | EA

To use Method 6, Assessors must demonstrate they meet the criteria in Section 8.2 of this Ruling, and provide the following:

- Evidence that either:
  - Another accredited Assessor is not available; or,
  - The Assessor is not able to access the site because the risk of a site visit has been deemed to be too high by an accredited Assessor or Assessor organisation; or,
  - The building is in lock-down, and access to the building has been limited; or
  - The spot measurement was to be conducted during the government mandated shutdown of non-essential business, starting 23 March 2020.
- Evidence that the engaged non-Assessor is familiar with the operation of the building (other Indoor Environment Professionals, such as those provided in the suitable non-Assessors list above, are preferred); and
- Evidence that non-Assessor uses appropriate real-time monitoring and air sampling equipment which meets the minimum equipment specifications in accordance with the *Indoor Environment for Offices Rules v1.0* (Section 11.5, Appendix E – Equipment Specification List); and
- Confirmation that the non-Assessor is aware of the appropriate measurements to take in accordance with the Rules.

The Assessor must have enough compliant information to conduct the rating in accordance with the Rules.

If all of the conditions above cannot be met, a non-Assessor may not be engaged to undertake spot measurements for a site visit and information from a non-Assessor will not be considered for a NABERS Indoor Environment rating.

For further guidance, please contact NABERS at [nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au).

For evidence and documentation requirements, see Section 5.3 of Ruling #1 and Section 8.3 of this Ruling.

**Note:** NABERS strongly encourages the Assessor to provide the non-Assessor with the appropriate equipment if it is not readily available or accessible.

### 8.2.3 Method 7 – Selection of alternative floors for spot measurements other than those prescribed by the Rules

Under this method, NABERS may allow flexibility for Indoor Environment ratings to be lodged using alternative floors for spot measurements other than those prescribed by Section 3.6 of the *Indoor Environment for Offices Rules v1.0*.

To use Method 7, Assessors must demonstrate they meet the criteria in Section 8.2 of this Ruling, and provide the following:

- A proposed strategy outlining the following:
  - Why the Assessor or non-Assessor is unable to take spot measurements on the floors as prescribed by the Rules; and
  - Which floors they will be taking spot measurements from, why they have chosen these floors and in what order of priority they are taken.
- Evidence confirming the HVAC setup, including floors which have been shut down on request from the tenant and/or building manager.
- Evidence confirming occupancy profile across the site (e.g. whether occupants have been consolidated or unconsolidated onto specific floors).

The Assessor must take spot measurements from floors prescribed by the Rules where possible.

If all of the conditions above cannot be met, this Ruling cannot be used. If this is the case, the Assessor should contact NABERS for further information at [nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au).

For evidence and documentation requirements, see Section 8.3 of this Ruling.

**Note:** Assessors will need to determine alternative floors in the same order of priority as per the *Indoor Environment for Offices Rules*, Section 3.6, *Selecting floors to sample*.

### 8.2.4 Entry into NABERS Rate

When submitting a rating using this Ruling, please select:

- “Yes” to the question under “*Compliance with the NABERS Rules*” and fill out the text box with the Ruling version number and date that approval to use the Ruling was granted by the NABERS team.
- (If applicable) “No” to the question under “*Mandatory Site Inspections*” and fill out the text box with the version number of the Ruling and method(s) used.

See Figure 6 below.

**Compliance to the NABERS Rules**

Is any part of the assessment of this rating **not in compliance** with the version(s) of the Rules as specified above? Yes ▾

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**Mandatory Site Inspection**

Did you personally conduct a site inspection of the entire rated premises for this rating as per the Rules? No ▾

If the site inspection was only partly completed, some of the functional spaces were not accessible or the site visit was not performed at all by the assessor of this rating, then select 'No' on the drop down list and fully describe the reasons why.

Figure 6

### 8.3 Examples of acceptable evidence or documentation

Assessors must provide evidence to demonstrate they meet the criteria under Section 8.2 of this Ruling. The evidence should eliminate any doubt in relation to the Assessor’s eligibility to use the respective Ruling. A combination of evidence types may be given.

All evidence provided is subject to NABERS’ approval.

For evidence and documentation requirements under this Ruling, see Section 5.3 and the following:

- Written correspondence between site management and tenants advising of reduced HVAC services;
- Spreadsheets containing necessary information (e.g. BMS data).

Assessors remain responsible for the accuracy of their ratings and must collect and retain all documentation as per the Rules, including any information gathered as part of this Ruling. This must be provided for Level 2 auditing, if required.

NABERS reserves the right to refuse requests on the grounds of inadequate or insufficient evidence.

If an Assessor is uncertain of the evidence type, they should contact NABERS for further information at [nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nabers@environment.nsw.gov.au).

# Contact us

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