

Energy Performance Certificates for Commercial Buildings

Why are they being introduced?

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) are being introduced as part of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) which is an EU directive. They are intended to encourage owners and tenants to choose energy efficient buildings when seeking new accommodation and improve the energy efficiency of the buildings they occupy.

Who is affected?

EPCs will apply to all existing buildings and new build, and are the responsibility of the building owner. EPCs are **only** required when there is a **change**, such as a change of ownership or occupants, or a change to the building structure. When a property is marketed the energy rating must be included.

What is it?

The EPC will show the '**asset rating**' of a building on an A to G scale. The asset rating is based on the energy performance of the building's fabric and services. This does **not** require any energy consumption data, but rather a survey of the building with regard to materials, layout, lighting and HVAC systems. The calculation tool for existing commercial properties is based on the SBEM tool currently used for new build. An advisory report with recommendations to improve the rating must also be obtained.

When are they being introduced?

EPCs will be introduced in phases from the 6th April 2008, with non-domestic buildings over 10,000m² in the first stage. In July all buildings over 2,500m² will also be included and all remaining buildings over 50m² from October 2007. EPCs are valid for up to 10 years and must be produced by an accredited assessor. The penalty for non-compliance is between £500 and £5,000 for commercial buildings depending on their rateable value.

Recommended Actions for Property Owners

1. Determine the floor area of all your properties.
2. Check the expiry dates for leases, prioritising those over the 10,000m² and 2,500m² thresholds. Check completion dates for new build.
3. Draw up a list of buildings requiring EPC's. Determine the date the EPC is due and allow at least 2 weeks to a month for assessment, depending on building size.
4. Gather any detailed drawings that are available for these properties and check that they are up to date.
5. Gather any data on the building specification, such as materials specification or heating types that are available, including any extension or renovation work.
6. Consider carrying out any outstanding maintenance or refurbishment work prior to certification. (Seek advice from an EPC assessor to ensure that improvements maximise the energy rating achieved.)
7. Keep a log of improvements to building fabric or services.
8. Talk to your tenants about EPCs and access for the energy assessor.
9. Check if DEC's or air-conditioning surveys will be required in addition.