

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)

May 2008



EPCs have been introduced to comply with the European Directive 2002/91/EC on energy efficiency. The Directive lays down a common methodology to measure energy performance of buildings throughout the European Union and the EPC is the certification document required.

To implement the Directive in Northern Ireland, The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) Regulations (NI) 2008 were made on 9 April 2008 (SR 2008 No 170).

An EPC gives details of the energy efficiency of a building. This is calculated from its structure and energy management systems. The ratings range from A (very efficient) to G (very inefficient). The certificate also shows a score from 1 to 150 with lower scores indicating lower CO² emissions.

The EPC must be accompanied by a recommendation report detailing measures to improve the energy efficiency of the building.

Other information required describes briefly the building and details about the energy assessor who supplied the certificate together with accreditation details.

The timetable for the implementation of the Regulations in respect of EPC's is as follows:-

Dwellings	Sale	30 June 2008
	New Builds	20 September 2008
	Rental	30 September 2008
Buildings other than dwellings	Sale	30 December 2008
	New Builds	30 September 2008
	Rental	30 December 2008

The provision applies to all existing dwellings on the market for sale after 30 June 2008, irrespective of how long they have been on the market.

Exemptions

EPCs are not required for buildings used as places of worship, certain temporary buildings, for industrial sites, workshops and non-residential agricultural buildings with low energy demand and for stand alone buildings smaller than 50m² which are not dwellings. Also, if a building is to be demolished after sale, an EPC will not be required.

An EPC can be supplied based on a representative apartment or unit in the same block, or, except in the case of a dwelling, on a common certification of the whole building for blocks with a common heating system.

A Display Energy Certificate is required for any building which has a floor area over 1000m², is occupied by public authorities or other bodies providing public services and which is frequently visited by members of the public. These must be prominently displayed to members of the public. The occupier must also possess an advisory report, which details improvements to the energy efficiency of the building.

Please note: The content of this article is for information purposes only and further advice should be sought from a professional advisor before any action is taken.

The Regulations also require five yearly inspections of air conditioning systems with an output exceeding 12kW, for which an inspection report must be issued. A cooling unit in a typical office room is 5-6kW so that two such units may escape inspection. Larger units usually found in retail premises are likely to have a 10-15kW output.

For sale, the seller must supply the EPC. For rental of properties, it is the prospective landlord. For buildings under construction, it is the person responsible for having the construction work carried out.

For Display Energy Certificates, the occupier is the responsible party. For air conditioning reports, responsibility rests on the person with control of the operation of the system.

The EPC must be made available free of charge to any prospective buyer or tenant at the earliest opportunity and in any event, before entering a contract for sale, renting or building. A person viewing a building or who has requested in writing information about a building should be given an EPC at that stage. Copies and electronic read only certificates may be supplied.

The DFP will nominate a person to keep a register to control the validation of EPCs. An energy assessor must ensure that each document issued by him is entered on the register and it is given a unique reference number. It cannot be altered after registration and it will be retained for a period of at least 20 years from the date of registration.

Part 7 of the Regulations deals with enforcement and makes provision for enforcement by way of civil penalties. Depending on the breach, these penalties range from £200 to £5000.

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