

ENVIRONMENTAL FACT SHEET

GUIDE TO ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES AND OTHER 'GREEN' TERMS

There's quite a lot of jargon floating about at the moment, with regards to sustainability and environmental issues. It's hard to know which new schemes are mandatory for your business, and what you can "opt" into as a way of reducing your company's impact on the environment.



By Sophie Hutchinson

As an authority on sustainable office design and energy reduction in buildings, Sophie understands how a greener design can help your business perform better. She holds a degree in Environmental Policy from the London School of Economics, is BREEAM trained and is an associate member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). And if that's not enough, she has also climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, ran a half marathon in the Sahara Desert and has recently completed the London Marathon.

You'll probably be used to checking out energy ratings on new freezers and dishwashers - it's something we all consider to be 'normal' nowadays. And you'll no doubt be familiar with the Government's Home Information Packs, which contain an energy efficiency rating of the property for sale.

This sort of rating system has now been extended to cover commercial and public buildings, and will be commonplace within the next few years. So when you visit a public building, you can expect to see its energy rating on display. And when you plan your office move, you can check out the energy efficiency of the buildings you're considering. Or even ensure that the building you occupy now, is not costing you for its inefficiencies.

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THE SUNDAY TIMES



BEST GREEN COMPANIES

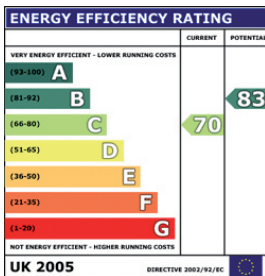
ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

WHAT IS AN ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE?

An **Energy Performance Certificate**, or EPC, grades a building's energy performance from A to G, with A being the most efficient. It's similar to the system used for grading white goods such as refrigerators.

There will be two types of certificate:

- a general EPC certificate required by nearly all buildings, and
- a Display Energy Certificate (DEC) for public buildings over 1000 metres square.



The Energy Performance Certification scheme is similar to the system used for grading domestic goods based on their energy efficiency.

EPCs, otherwise referred to as **asset certificates**, which last for 10 years, will measure the intrinsic energy performance of a building based on its design. DEC, or **operating certificates**, will be renewed annually and measure how much energy is actually used by a building and how it is managed. They should be displayed in a prominent place clearly visible to the public.

EPCs have been introduced following a European Union Directive on Energy Performance in Buildings. They provide an easily understandable 'at-a-glance' guide to energy efficiency and are designed to encourage everyone to think about the issue and take action to improve performance.

WHO NEEDS TO HAVE ONE?

Nearly all residential, public and commercial buildings will be required to hold an EPC, and the law states that when a building is sold or rented out, a valid EPC (not more than 10 years old) must be made available by the owner to the prospective purchaser or tenant.

Buildings currently exempt from the legislation are places of worship, temporary buildings in use for less than two years, buildings with a low energy demand such as barns and very small stand alone structures such as sheds.

WHY HAVE EPCs BEEN INTRODUCED?

An EPC will tell you what a building's theoretical, as opposed to actual, energy rating is. This is based on standard energy assumptions about energy usage. It will then tell you what energy rating can be achieved if various recommendations are implemented.

The **European Union Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)** was introduced in the UK from January 2006 with a three year implementation period ending in January 2009.

It forms part of the Government's strategy to meet climate change targets agreed under the Kyoto Protocol.

We live in an increasingly environmentally-aware age, and businesses may want to work towards a low EPC to demonstrate their 'green' credentials.

Energy efficiency can give a company an edge over its competitors, as well as demonstrating a high level of corporate responsibility, which may be attractive to potential customers or investors.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COMMISSIONING AN EPC?

Landlords and property managers are responsible for ensuring that EPCs and, where necessary, DEC's are commissioned. Certificates can only be provided by accredited energy assessors.

HOW ARE THE REGULATIONS ENFORCED?

Local authority Building Control officers will ensure certificates are in place for new buildings. Council-based Trading Standards will be responsible for enforcement of certificates in existing buildings.

The Government is to introduce a system of financial penalties for non-compliance, with the maximum fine initially set at £5,000.

OTHER GREEN GUIDANCE

It's estimated that, on average, each of us produces 94 pounds of CO₂ every day... That's 15 tonnes (16.5 tons) every year!

CARBON NEUTRAL

Many companies are striving to help the environment by working to reduce their carbon footprints.

Being carbon neutral simply means calculating the carbon dioxide (CO₂) generated by a particular activity or business and then balancing that with an equal investment in renewable energy or reforestation. This process is also called 'carbon-offsetting'.

FTSE4GOOD



www.ftse.com/Indices/FTSE4Good_Index_Series/

FTSE4Good is an index for socially responsible investment set up by FTSE, the well-known financial index provider.

The FTSE4Good index covers three areas: working towards environmental sustainability, developing positive relationships, and upholding and supporting universal human rights.

BREEAM®



www.breeam.org

BREEAM® stands for the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method. It is used to assess the performance of building across a series of categories including good design, energy use, sustainable materials, air and water pollution, access to public transport, land use and water consumption.

Credits are awarded in each category and then used to produce a single overall score and a rating on a scale of Pass, Good, Very Good or Excellent.

LEED®



www.usgbc.org/LEED/

LEED® is the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design green building rating system. The standard has come to the UK from America, and it is becoming an increasingly well-known method of rating the sustainability of a building.

ISO 14001



www.bsi-uk.com/Environment

One of the best known terms in sustainability, ISO 14001 is the most widely recognised international standard for environmental management systems. It is recognised as having emerged from the Rio Summit held in 1992. The summit led to a commitment to protection of the environment across the world.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE FOR NON-HAZARDOUS WASTE

This refers to new rules from the Environment Agency which state that all non-hazardous waste must be pre-treated before it is disposed of at landfill sites. This rule only previously applied to hazardous waste.

Companies have a duty of care to describe their waste properly and only give it to someone authorised to handle it.

Any company which decides to send waste to a landfill site should ensure that it will be treated first. Treatment covers a range of processes from the simple act of sorting waste for recycling to reducing its hazardous nature.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CERTIFICATION



www.fsc-uk.org

This scheme gives businesses and individuals the chance to use sustainable timber products.

The Forest Stewardship Council is a global organisation backed by environmental pressure groups such as Greenpeace and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

A certification scheme is in operation, which easily allows companies to identify timber from sustainable sources.

CARBON TRUST



www.carbontrust.co.uk

The Carbon Trust is a not-for-profit private company set up by the UK Government in response to the threat of climate change. It aims to accelerate the move to a low carbon economy through its work with British businesses.

The trust offers advice on low carbon technology and on incentives available to help companies reduce their CO₂ levels.

ENERGY SAVING TRUST



www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

The Energy Saving Trust is a not-for-profit organisation jointly funded by the Government and the private sector. It aims to promote energy conservation and reduce CO₂ emissions.

The trust manages phase one of the Low Carbon Building Programme and provides free advice through a network of regional centres.

The trust asks all businesses to commit to reduce CO₂ emissions by 20 per cent before 2010.

BUILDING REGULATIONS PART L

Part L of the Building Regulations refers to conservation of fuel and power.

The regulations, introduced in 2006, set high standards for the design and construction or refurbishment of buildings. These include new requirements for energy performance ratings including the setting of maximum CO₂ limits.

SUSTAINABLE OFFICE DESIGN CHECKLIST

Morgan Lovell's step-by-step guide to creating a 'green' office interior can be downloaded for free at morganlovell.co.uk/help-advice/checklists/sustainability-checklist.

Other publications by Morgan Lovell include:

Whitepapers [*Sustainable office design - Unlocking performance and productivity*](#)

Checklists [*Choosing the right office design and fit out partner*](#)
 (includes a section on finding a fit out contractor with the right environmental credentials)



breeam