



What is an Energy Performance Certificate (EPCs)?

An EPC is a targeted energy efficient overview of a property that helps to identify what energy improvement measures are currently in place and what could be undertaken for that property, helping you cut usage, bills and save CO₂.

When do you need one?

The EPC is required by law on Sales, Lettings, Sub lettings, Holiday Lettings and Assignments of leases. You should ensure you have organised to have one undertaken before marketing the property and have it in place before you exchange contracts. EPCs are valid standalone for people looking for energy efficiency advice and guidance on properties.

What are the penalties for not having one?

On a domestic property you can be fined in the region of £200 for failure to possess a valid EPC as required.

On a commercial property you can be fined on a sale up to £5,000. On a rental or lease up to 12.5% of the rental incomes.

Trading Standards are the enforcement body and have indicated that they are now actively seeking to enforce EPC legislation since the demise of HIPs.

What does an EPC Inspection involve?

It involves a thorough inspection of the building to provide an overview of the heating system, hot water system, insulation and construction information on the building. This helps to identify what the property is currently like, what energy efficiency measures have currently been done and what, if any, are pertinent to that property.

What are the recommendations about?

The recommendations are just areas that the owner should think of acting on and are broken up into Low Cost, Higher Cost and Further measures. This helps to identify which measures are available to the property and roughly how much it will save on the annual heating bills. Normally the lowest cost measures are more energy efficient! The EPC can also help to identify where you may be able to find grants to implement the measures. It is a common misconception the recommendations are mandatory, they aren't! They are for you to do, for your own benefit, if you want to! The average EPC saving tends to be in the region of £100 plus per annum.

What is the difference between Commercial and Domestic EPCs?

The simple differences are that the Commercial EPC is far more detailed in the inspection and data inputting to a Domestic EPC. Everything from the exact type of lighting, building orientation, solar gain, window frames and location is included in the Commercial EPC. Because of the level of detail the recommendations are far more detailed than with a Domestic EPC. A Commercial EPC takes much longer than a Domestic EPC to inspect, evaluate and produce.

Who can undertake assessments?

Assessors are qualified for the jobs that they undertake. Existing domestic dwellings can be dealt with by a Domestic Energy Assessor. On new domestic buildings an On Construction Dwelling EPC is required on completion and is valid for sale. These can only be done by a qualified On Construction Energy Assessor.

Commercial buildings are broken into three levels. Level 3 is small to medium sized existing commercial units. Level 4 for new builds and larger buildings with complicated heating or air con systems. Level 5 is for massive new build sky scrapers or large projects like new build shopping centres.

EPC Lifespan

At present after an EPC is issued it is valid for a ten year period,

EPC Myths

There are various myths out there and these are some of the common ones:

- EPCs are not pass or fail, the result is just a reflection of the building as is and how energy efficient it is, as well as what could be done to improve it.
- With the demise of the HIP the EPC does still exist and is definitely required. Within the new parliament the legislation will be tightened up, especially on compliance.
- The EPC will be not be cancelled or removed. It is mandated under European Law. It might be moved about to a degree, but it cannot be cancelled. It is here to stay.
- The EPC is not just the ratings graph that you see on property details. There is a full report containing details on the property, the recommendations and the suggested payback periods, as well as advice on where to seek information on grants.

Summary

EPCs do have a valuable role in providing targeted energy efficiency advice. They exist to help people make informed decisions on how to improve their property and to help them cut the costs of running the property. They are mandatory in certain circumstances but always remember to look at the full information the report contains and think about acting on it.

SAS EPC

We are based in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, and provide Commercial and Domestic Energy Performance Certificates, as well as Virtual Tours, Floor Plans and other services. Please call us if you have a requirement, or need professional advice. Alternatively, visit our website, www.sasepc.co.uk for more information. Our clients include social housing organisations, solicitors, estate agents, lettings agents, landlords and private customers.

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