

# Energy certificates for voluntary community sector buildings

New legal requirements for building operators 2012

Many charities and voluntary groups own and operate community buildings, many more are being encouraged to take on buildings that provide public services. Most building managers will be aware of the need for Energy Performance Certificates (EPC), when leasing or purchasing property, however there are increasingly stringent regulations around energy certificates. These will have legal compliance and in some cases cost implications on voluntary sector building operators.

From 9th July 2013 all buildings over 500m<sup>2</sup> “which are frequently visited by the public, such as shops and shopping centres, supermarkets, restaurants, theatres, banks and hotels” that have had an EPC issued, will have to display that EPC “in a prominent place clearly visible to the public”.

**An EPC is valid for 10 years, or until a building undergoes significant alteration. There is no annual re-certification cost for EPCs.**

A second type of certificate called a Display Energy Certificate (DEC) is required for larger buildings that deliver public services, either by a public body directly, or by a third party such as a charity or company. All public buildings over 500m<sup>2</sup> will need to purchase and display a DEC by 9th January 2013. **DECs have to be renewed annually with an annual recertification cost.** DECs include an advisory report informing the building user how to reduce energy use. The advisory report is valid for 7 years.

Energy certification is required under the EU Energy Performance in Buildings Directive. UK legislation has split the certification requirement into DECs and EPCs.

## What is the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive?

The EU-EPBD is European legislation that demands a range of measures to improve the energy performance of domestic and non domestic buildings.



These include issue of building energy certificates, inspections for larger air conditioning systems and advice on more efficient boiler operation for commercial property. The EU legislation was tightened in 2010 and this is now moving into UK law.

Display of energy certificates for public sector buildings over 1000m<sup>2</sup> regularly accessed by the public has been required since 2009. Under the tightened legislation, from 9th January 2013 this will extend as detailed above to all buildings over 500m<sup>2</sup> and to buildings over 250m<sup>2</sup> from 9 July 2015.

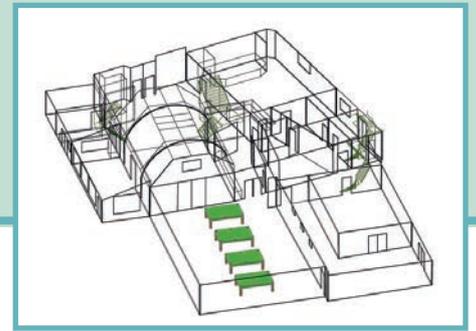
[Download the official EPBD recast of the Directive approved 19 May 2010 \(pdf\).](#)

## Exemptions to the requirement for an EPC are:

- Places of worship
- Temporary buildings in use for less than two years, e.g. site offices
- Low energy demand buildings such as agricultural buildings, e.g. barns
- Stand alone buildings less than 50m<sup>2</sup>, e.g. sheds and summer houses

## Penalties

The EPBD demands “penalties provided for must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive.” The level of penalties for next year is not available as yet. Member States must tell the Commission what these penalties are by 9th January 2013, the current Fixed Penalty Notice for not displaying a valid certificate is £500 and £1000 for not having an Advisory Report, this will almost certainly rise.



Penalty fines will apply if a valid certificate is not produced up to 6 months after the certificate was required or a valid certificate is not displayed. Trading Standards enforce certification of existing buildings.

### Implications for the VCS

One of the earliest impacts is in terms of legislative compliance risk. Any buildings operated, that are more than 500m<sup>2</sup> and which have ever had an EPC issued for sale, rent or as built, will need to display that certificate in a public place. To check whether an EPC has been issued for your building you can give us a call at NEPes. Lost EPCs can be reissued for a small admin and postage charge.

For buildings over 500m<sup>2</sup> occupied by the public sector or delivering a public service, a DEC will need to be purchased, the certificate must be renewed annually, though the accompanying advisory report is valid for 7 years. An EPC or DEC can cost £250-500 per building in year 1, with an annual renewal fee for DEC's of around £100-150.

### Who can produce Energy Performance Certificates?

Only accredited energy assessors are able to carry out assessments to produce Energy Performance Certificates or DEC's. Not all assessors are qualified for both. More complex buildings, for example buildings with air handling units, such as hospitals or universities, will require higher level EPC assessors and thus be more expensive.

All energy assessors must be registered with an approved government accreditation scheme.

### How to keep costs down

As large public bodies will have to procure significant numbers of energy certificates towards the end of the year, if you need to purchase DEC's it is worth talking to your local authority or local health trust

about how and when they are purchasing certificates, to see if they would be happy to co-procure.

This could save considerable amounts in bulk procurement. Alternatively if there is sufficient demand local CVS offices may be interested in running a single procurement for the local VCS.

There are many small independent sole traders providing DEC's and EPC's, often national providers will use these agents. If you are based in a single geographical area, it may be worth trying to identify local providers. Variation in costs is high, and there are many suppliers. It is worth getting several quotes.

To procure EPC's and DEC's you will need the address, postcode, square meter measurements, a floor plan or CAD drawings and a reliable contact at each site to arrange access for the assessor. 12 months energy consumption data is also required for DEC's.

The assessor will need full building access to all areas and plant room or boiler. If an assessor makes an appointment to undertake a survey and no one is available to let them in, or provide adequate access, you may have to pay twice for the assessor to come back again later.

**NEP is a social enterprise and a registered charity, 100% of our profits are reinvested in public health and carbon reduction projects. We are currently supporting a number of large organisations to procure DEC's and EPC's to meet the legislative changes.**

**We support Public, Private and Voluntary sector organisations in carbon reduction and natural resource efficiency; from carbon footprinting and environmental reporting to renewable energy site assessments. Visit our website [www.nottenergy.com/consultancy](http://www.nottenergy.com/consultancy) for more details.**

To improve your chances of winning public sector contracts, reduce energy costs and cut your carbon footprint call us for a chat about our environmental consultancy services on 0115 985 9057.