

A Landlord's Guide to Energy Performance Certificates

Landlords - are you ready for EPCs?

From 1st October 2008, all rental properties with a new tenancy in England and Wales will be required to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).

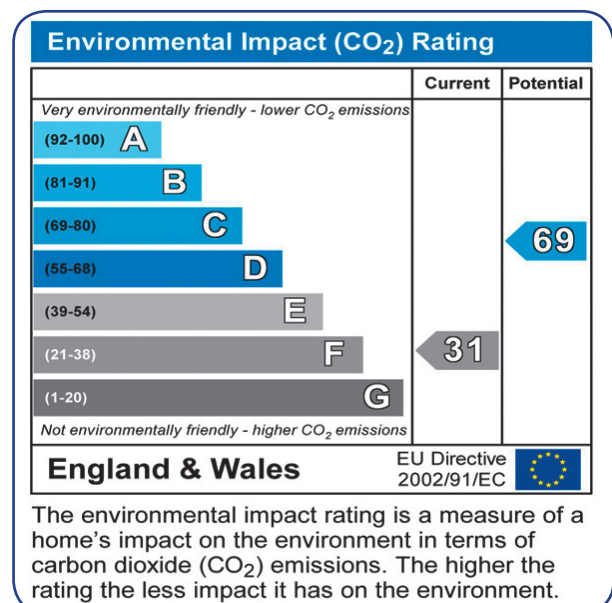
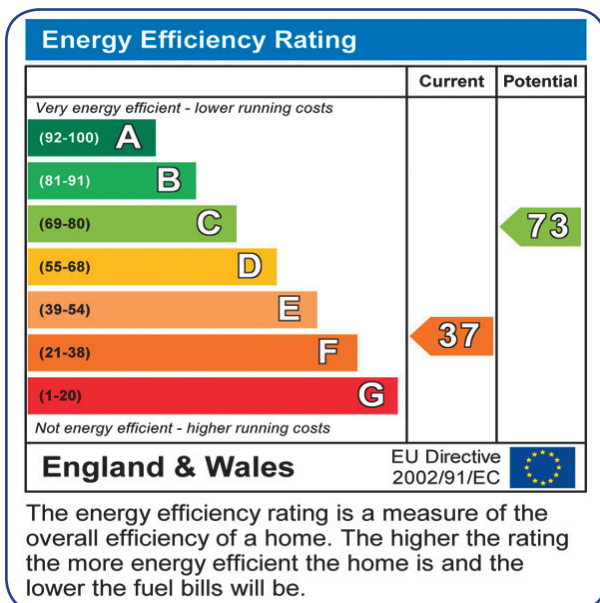
Why should you care?

Because your prospective tenants will be able to see at a glance how energy efficient and environmentally friendly your properties are. If you have invested in energy saving measures your properties will perform well and will really stand out from the crowd. If not you may find them harder to rent out in future.

What is an Energy Performance Certificate?

EPCs look similar to the energy labels found on domestic appliances such as fridges and washing machines.

The energy efficiency and environmental impact of your property will be rated on a scale from A-G (where A is the most efficient and G the least efficient) as shown below. Current running costs for heating, hot water and lighting will also be shown on the certificate, together with a list of recommended energy saving improvements.



How do I get an Energy Performance Certificate?

Either yourself or your letting agent will have to commission one from an accredited Domestic Energy Assessor (DEA). They will visit your property to assess the age, construction and location of the property as well as its current fittings such as heating systems, insulation, double glazing etc. DEAs can be found in local directories or via www.hcrregister.com/FindAssessorInspector

How much will they cost?

The cost of an EPC will vary. At the moment average costs range between £40 - £120, so it's worth shopping around.

When do I need to get one?

It is recommended, especially if you have a reasonably high turnover of tenants, that you don't wait until you have a vacancy after 1st October 2008 but get an EPC as soon as possible, to ensure that you comply with the law when it comes in. If you don't have one after that date you could be fined £200 for non compliance. The EPC will remain valid for ten years.

What can I do to make my energy rating as high as possible?

- Insulating your property is the most cost effective measure you can take. In most cases cavity wall insulation is straightforward, inexpensive and hassle-free. Installing new loft insulation in most properties is an easy DIY job and should be done to a depth of 270mm.
- If your boiler is over 15 years old it's probably time to replace it and you'll get a better rating if you combine it with modern heating controls. If you need to save space, buy a combi boiler, which does not store hot water in a tank but heats water directly from the cold water mains as it is used.
- Fit a hot water tank jacket.
- While double glazing can be fairly expensive, it will reduce noise and lower heating bills.
- When purchasing new appliances look out for the Energy Saving Recommended logo, and choose the most energy efficient in their category.



For free, impartial advice on energy efficiency improvements call 0800 512 012 or visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Are there grants to help cover installation costs?

There are several grants available that can cut your costs by half or even to zero! Visit www.est.org.uk/myhome/gid to see if you are eligible.

If your tenants are in receipt of certain benefits you may be able to get your property insulated at a significant discount or even for free. Visit www.warmfront.co.uk (England) and www.heeswales.co.uk (Wales) for further information.

If you have insulated your properties you can also reduce your income tax by claiming under the Landlords Energy Saving Allowance. Visit www.hmrc.gov.uk/budget2004/revbn31.htm for further information.

Why is the Government introducing EPCs?

Domestic energy use accounts for 27% of the UK's carbon dioxide emissions. The Government is introducing a number of energy saving initiatives, including EPCs, aimed at making all buildings more energy efficient. These measures are being applied across all European Union countries as per the European Directive for the Energy Performance of Buildings.

Where can I find out how energy efficient my properties are now?

The Energy Saving Trust will provide you with a personalised Home Energy Check report on each of your properties for free. Simply complete the questionnaire* today and you should have your report very soon. Alternatively, visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk for more information.

*Available online at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/proxy/view/full/165/homeenergycheck

Further information

www.homeinformationpack.gov.uk

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

www.hipassociation.co.uk

www.communities.gov.uk/epbd

Energy Performance Certificate Helpline: 0845 365 2468

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