

IMPROVING THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF OUR HOMES AND BUILDINGS

Display Energy Certificates Media Overview

This pack provides core information for the media on Display Energy Certificates (DECs)

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Introduction

Buildings are responsible for almost 50% of the UK's energy consumption and carbon emissions, and non-dwellings alone are responsible for almost 20%. Even small improvements to the energy performance and the way we use our buildings could have a significant effect on our fuel bills, carbon emissions and the UK's commitment to tackling climate change.

The Government is introducing a range of initiatives aimed at helping England and Wales improve the energy efficiency of its buildings and meet its carbon emission reduction targets, including Display Energy Certificates (DECs).

By 1 October 2008, public buildings over 1,000m² must display a DEC at all times. Display Energy Certificates form part of the EU Energy Performance for Buildings Directive (EPBD), which all member states must implement by January 2009.

DECs complement Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) which are already a requirement for homes and large commercial buildings when they are built, sold or rented.

In summary:

- Energy certificates help to address the significant contribution that buildings make to our total carbon emissions
- Energy certificates provide specific and targeted information on individual buildings
- Energy certificates and Advisory Reports enable people to take simple and easy first steps to saving energy and reducing waste.

This information pack will provide information and background on Display Energy Certificates.

The Display Energy Certificate

What is a Display Energy Certificate?

By 1 October 2008, public buildings over 1,000m² must display a DEC.

DECs promote the improvement of the energy performance of buildings and form part of the final implementation in England and Wales of the European Directive. They are a simple and realistic first step to finding out the energy efficiency of public sector buildings across England and Wales and making the whole country more sustainable.

DECs show the actual energy usage of a building and increase transparency about the energy efficiency of public buildings. They inform people about the building in use and that building's energy consumption. The certificates look similar to energy labels currently provided with vehicles and appliances, such as fridges, and use the same A-G efficiency scale – A being most efficient and G being least efficient.

DECs are valid for one year. The accompanying Advisory Report, which lists cost-effective measures to improve the energy rating of the building, is valid for seven years. This is deemed a reasonable interval during which the occupier has sufficient opportunity to act on the recommendations, after which, a review will be necessary in light of new technology and changes in energy prices.

To make it easier for public authorities with multiple buildings on one site to comply with the legislation, a site-based approach for the first year is to be allowed. This means that only one DEC will need to be produced based on the total energy consumption of the eligible buildings on the site. Public bodies most likely to be affected by this approach are NHS Trusts, universities and schools.

The DEC should be clearly displayed at all times in a prominent place within the building in question, and in a place which is clearly visible to the public.

This obligation was introduced by law and is to be enforced by Trading Standards Officers.

Who needs a Display Energy Certificate?

Display Energy Certificates are required for buildings (with a total useful area greater than 1000m²) that are occupied by a public authority or institution providing a public service to a large number of persons. Private organisations, including those that may share a building with a relevant institution, do not need to display a DEC, but may wish to do so on a voluntary basis.

How to prepare for a Display Energy Certificate

Before an accredited Energy Assessor can produce a DEC and Advisory Report building managers will need to obtain actual meter readings or consignment notes for all fuels used during the last year, including:

- Gas fuels
- Oil fuels
- Solid fuels
- District heating and cooling
- Grid electricity and electricity generated on site or obtained by private distribution systems from other sites.

This information can be obtained from a number of sources:

- On-site energy meters
- The building landlord or representative
- The utility supplier
- The district heating/cooling provider.

Some public buildings are choosing to have the assessment done and a DEC displayed ahead of the 1 October deadline to show the public and their customers that they are taking their commitment to climate change seriously, and to find out how they can make their buildings more energy efficient and start saving money.

Producing a Display Energy Certificate

DECs and Advisory Reports must be produced by an Energy Assessor that is accredited for the correct type of building. The process is as follows:

- The assessor will review the energy consumption data provided by the building manager in line with the Government approved method
- Adjustments may be made for occupancy, special energy uses, weather and climate
- The assessor will give a measured CO² emission per square meter based on the adjusted energy consumption and total useful floor area and building type
- The assessor will then produce a DEC and an Advisory Report from this information in line with the approved method
- The DEC will need to be lodged in a national register by the assessor and given a unique certificate reference number.

The national register can be found at www.ndepcregister.com. Energy Assessors must act in an independent manner – this is ensured by their membership of an approved accreditation scheme.

The Energy Assessor will make recommendations from a walk-around survey or from a desk-based survey using data previously collected about the building.

Final checklist for October:

- Gather fuel and energy consumption data for your buildings to enable calculation of the year's carbon emissions
- Employ an accredited Energy Assessor to produce a DEC and Advisory Report for your building
- Display the valid DEC in a prominent place clearly visible to the public at all times
- Have possession or control of a valid Advisory Report.

What will the Display Energy Certificate look like?

- The DEC shows an Asset Rating for this building if this is available (by way of an EPC).
- This rating is shown on a scale from A to G, where A is the lowest CO₂ emissions (most efficient) and G is the highest CO₂ emissions (least efficient).
- The Operational Rating (OR) is a numerical indicator of the actual annual carbon dioxide emissions from the building.
- Also shown are the Operational Ratings for the previous two years; this provides information on whether the energy performance of the building is improving or not.
- To enable members of the public to view the document easily, it should be no smaller than A3 in size.

What happens in a year's time if a building's rating hasn't improved or has got worse?

You are under no obligation to act on the recommendations for energy improvements to the building or improve your rating. However, taking action on the recommendations is likely to improve the energy efficiency of your building, reduce your fuel bills, cut its carbon emissions and could improve public perception of your building.

How long does it take to produce a DEC and Advisory Report?

The length of the assessment depends on the size and complexity of the building. It also depends on the amount of preparatory work, such as data collection, undertaken by building occupiers and or their energy managers.

How much does a DEC cost?

The cost of producing a DEC and Advisory Report will depend on the size and complexity of the building, and the amount of work undertaken by the occupier ahead of the assessment.

What happens for buildings occupied after 1 October 2008?

If a public institution occupies a building after 1 October 2008 then they may not yet be in possession of an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), which is required for the sale, rent or construction of buildings of commercial buildings with useful floor space less than 500m² from 6 April 2008 and all other buildings from 1 October 2008.

Without an EPC these building will not have an Asset Rating - the building's energy efficiency rating.

If the public institution is a new occupier, or has been in occupation for less than 15 months by 1 October 2008, they may not have the annual fuel meter readings available which are required for a DEC and Operational Rating. The legislation makes provisions for these cases and the occupier should e-mail help@epbduk.info to confirm.

Where can I find an Energy Assessor?

The accreditation schemes will maintain a list of their members and should be able to provide contact details of assessors local to your area. An Energy Assessor should always be able to provide details of the accreditation scheme of which they are a member and their membership number. Details of the accreditation schemes are on the website www.communities.gov.uk/epbd.

I need to display a DEC – do I also need an EPC?

You will only need to have an EPC if you construct (including certain modifications), sell or let your building. If you do have an EPC for your building, the rating must be displayed on your DEC.

What happens with buildings which are multi-use?

Where a building is partly occupied by a public authority or a relevant institution, the authority or institution is responsible for displaying a DEC and having a valid advisory report if they occupy a useful floor area greater than 1000m². Other private organisations occupying the building, irrespective of the size they occupy, do not need to display a DEC.

What happens if the buildings are on a site or campus?

For relevant buildings that are on a site or campus, energy metering information can be collected at site level rather than building level.

Although multiple small buildings on a campus where each building is less than 1000m² are excluded, if these buildings are linked to one another by a heated space or are served by the same heating or cooling system then a DEC is required. The energy consumption for each separate building or each group of linked buildings with total useful floor area exceeding 1000m², will then be derived by proportioning on the basis of floor area.

To make it easier for public authorities with multiple buildings on one site to comply with the legislation, a site-based approach for the first year is to be allowed. This means that only one DEC will need to be produced based on the total energy consumption of the eligible buildings on the site. Public bodies most likely to be affected by this approach are NHS Trusts, universities and schools.

What is the penalty for not displaying a DEC?

Civil law applies and Trading Standards have the duty of enforcement.

Trading Standards can act on complaints from the public or make random investigations. If the authorities believe that an occupier is affected by the regulations, they can request that they produce the relevant documents within seven days of the request.

Failure to comply with their request or the regulations may result in the issue of a penalty charge notice.

The penalty is £500 for failing to display a DEC at all times in a prominent place clearly visible to the public and £1,000 for failing to have possession of a valid Advisory Report. In addition to these penalties, it is still necessary to commission the documents.

What's the difference between an EPC and a DEC?

An EPC reflects how energy efficient the building is. A DEC reflects how the building is being used by looking at the actual energy consumption over the last 12 months and the trend over three years.

Why are public authorities and institution buildings only required to have a DEC, why not every building that the public visit?

The intention is to initially compel central and local government, public authorities and institutions to display DEC's. We will be consulting with a view to extending DEC's to private organisations that are also visited by the public. We know that some private companies are looking to do voluntary DEC's.

What is the definition of 'a large number of persons' and a building 'frequently visited by those persons'?

The buildings must be visited by a large number of persons and therefore frequently visited by those persons. Buildings that are unlikely to satisfy this requirement include:

- Buildings where only employees visit Buildings where non-employees visit only for the purposes of delivery, to carry out maintenance activities or for non-public facing activities such as business meetings.

The types of buildings where a DEC is not required include defence installations such as missile silos and ammunition dumps.

By default we expect most public buildings to have a DEC.

Does Eland House have a DEC?

Eland House does have a DEC and the building has been given an F rating. The DEC has been displayed since 17 July 2008.

Our rating for Eland House tells us we must clearly do better to make a difference to our energy performance. We are now acting on recommendations from our advisory reports to help us improve future ratings.

For more information, visit www.communities.gov.uk/epbd