



Communities
and Local Government

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and renting homes: A tenant's guide



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From 1 October 2008 landlords must provide an Energy Performance Certificate to people who want to rent a home from them.

An energy performance certificate (EPC) gives you information about the energy efficiency of the home you want to rent.

What does this mean in practice?

The landlord (or someone acting on their behalf, such as an estate agent) must make available an EPC free of charge for the home* you are interested in renting as early as possible. This should be when you are first given written information about the home* or when you view it, and before you enter into any contract to pay rent to the landlord.

If you are already renting a home on 1 October 2008 and carry on living there after that date, your landlord does not need to provide you with an EPC.

What is an Energy Performance Certificate?

An EPC is similar to the energy performance certificates now provided with domestic appliances such as refrigerators and washing machines.

The EPC provides a rating for the energy performance of a home from A to G, where A is very efficient and G is very inefficient.

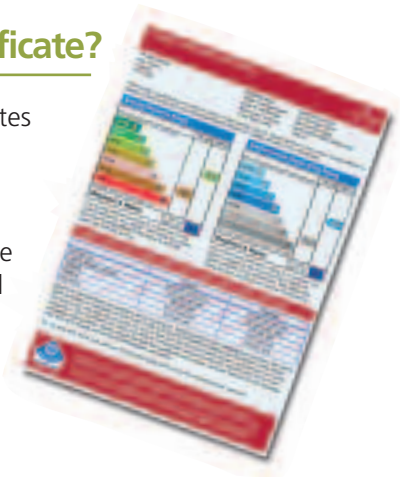
The EPC shows two things about the house:

- the energy-efficiency rating (this is based on how much the home would cost to run); and
- the environmental impact rating (this is based on how much carbon dioxide is released into the environment because of the home).

The rating is based on factors such as age, property layout, construction, heating, lighting, and insulation. The ratings are standard so you can compare the energy efficiency of one home easily with another. The typical rating for a home is D or E.

A recommendation report forms part of the certificate. This is a list of ways in which the energy efficiency of the home could be improved.

An EPC is valid for 10 years. Because of this the EPC the landlord gives you may be up to 10 years old.



* An EPC is only required for a property which is self-contained. It is not required when a tenant rents a room and shares facilities, where a tenant has a separate contract with the landlord.



Why do I need an Energy Performance Certificate?

The EPC and the recommendations that come with it give you important information about your home's energy efficiency.

The certificate will provide you with information about how much it is likely to cost to run the home you are interested in renting.

Bear in mind that the estimated running costs are based on:

- standard assumptions about a property, including how many people will live there and how long it is heated each day; and
- average fuel prices when the EPC was produced – these could be up to 10 years old.

The **actual** energy you will use in running a property will depend on how you use the property, for example how long you have the heating turned on for, and whether lights and appliances are left on.

What does the Recommendation Report contain?

The report includes cost-effective recommendations split into low-cost improvements (up to £500) and high-cost improvements (over £500).

The report also includes more advanced energy improvements that your landlord could make to a home to help it reach the highest possible energy-efficiency standards. Many of these improvements are expensive and will take much longer to pay for themselves.

Cost-effective recommendations for improving the energy efficiency of a home could include:

- using low-energy light bulbs;
- adding loft insulation;
- installing double glazing; or
- installing a condensing boiler.

In certain circumstances, you may be able to apply for grants to carry out these recommendations. Contact the Energy Saving Trust (their details are at the end of this leaflet) or your local council for more information.



I'm worried about fuel bills – how can I make sure my home is more energy-efficient?

Your landlord does not have to carry out any of the recommendations in the report.

However, you can help to reduce bills by being as energy-efficient as possible in the way you run your home. For example, turning down the thermostat, making sure that the heating is turned off when no-one is at home and using low-energy light bulbs can all help to reduce the energy you use.

If you want to carry out larger improvements, you will probably need to ask permission from your landlord. You may also ask your landlord to carry out improvements, or they may choose to make them themselves, though of course they don't have to.

Warm Front

Warm Front is the Government's main scheme to help people who can't afford to pay fuel bills, and is open to most households in England who are claiming certain benefits. Grants of up to £2,700 are available (or £4,000 for homes with oil-fired heating systems). If the tenant qualifies for the scheme then the property is eligible. It is up to you to apply, not your landlord. Warm Front is not available for tenants of Housing Associations or local authorities. You can find more information about Warm Front and whether you are eligible from www.warmfront.co.uk

The Home Energy Efficiency Scheme

If you live in Wales, you may be able to apply for the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme. This works in a similar way to Warm Front. They offer grants of up to £3,600. You can get more information about this from www.heeswales.co.uk

How can I check my Energy Performance Certificate is genuine?

Every EPC has a reference number on the top right-hand side of the certificate. To check that it is genuine, go to www.epcregister.com and enter the reference number into the register. You should see the copy of your EPC. If you are worried that your EPC is fake, contact the accreditation scheme which is shown on page 2 of the certificate.

My landlord hasn't provided me with an EPC. Who do I talk to?

If you have viewed a property or are starting a tenancy and the landlord or their agent hasn't given you an EPC, contact your local trading standards office or Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06, or visit www.consumerdirect.gov.uk



For further information about EPCs

Communities and Local Government

www.communities.gov.uk/epbd

For further information about energy efficiency, practical advice and grants, contact the Energy Savings Trust:

Energy Savings Trust

www.est.org.uk

ACT ON CO₂ advice line: 0800 512012

A Welsh translation is available on request by calling 0870 1226 236.
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