

Energy performance certificates

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From January 2009, anyone selling or leasing business premises must obtain an

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) before they put the property on the market. Stephen Ellis of Temple Heelis Solicitors' commercial department explains what the certificates show, and outlines what you need to do to obtain one.

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) show how efficiently a property uses energy and minimises carbon emissions. Clear, simple graphics show the buyer or prospective tenant the results of the assessment at a glance using an A–G rating, where A is the best and G is the worst. The EPC also gives advice on cost effective ways to improve the rating.

The rainbow chart on the left is the Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) which gives an idea of running costs. The blue chart (right) summarises the CO2 emissions. Most commercial premises rate between a D–E on the present average.

Obtaining a certificate is quite simple – if a sale or lease triggers a need for an EPC, the seller or landlord needs to contact an accredited assessor to come and carry out an inspection. Generally, assessors are surveyors or surveying accredited estate agents. Temple Heelis does not arrange assessments, but we can put you in touch with assessors. Assessments are individually priced according to the size of property and the time needed to gather the data. Assessors will usually give a quotation first.

The assessor visits the property and measures the area of the premises and the performance of equipment in the property that uses energy, such as heating and air conditioning. You don't have to do anything in advance or produce any paperwork.

The results of the survey are fed into a computer and a programme generates the Energy Performance Certificate. You don't need to do anything else or spend money on trying to improve the rating before the sale.

An EPC is valid for 10 years. You can use the same certificate for a disposal at a later date.

Nothing in the EPC regulations specifically applies to kitchens and catering, where there is particularly high energy use. However, there are separate regulations for buildings in public use and for buildings using air conditioning. We can advise on these.

For buyers and tenants

From 1 January 2009, it has been compulsory for a seller or landlord to provide an EPC before marketing the property. It should be included with the market information. Usually it would be detailed in the agent's literature. If it is not available, you should ask the selling agent why not.

The EPC may contain recommendations for improving the energy efficiency of the property. These are not compulsory, but there is a wide assumption that in the future business rates may be calculated on the basis of the building's energy rating.

You do not have to display an EPC, but there are separate certificates required with regard to public buildings which you do need to display – we can advise on these.

As above, an EPC is valid for 10 years and a public certificate is valid for 3 years.

Temple Heelis Commercial Department will be happy to supply you with the details of several accredited assessors in the local area and advise on any aspect of energy regulations that you are not sure about.

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