**Energy Performance Certificates**

An energy performance certificate (EPC) is an energy labelling system which has been introduced to measure the overall energy efficiency of buildings. An EPC provides a rating A to G for the energy performance of a building. The ratings are set against standard criteria to enable one building to be compared with another of a similar type. “A” is a high energy efficient building and “G” being a low energy efficient building.

An EPC is required before a building is placed on the market for sale, placed on the market for rental, when a building is newly constructed, an existing building undergoes major renovations or when an existing building goes under such works that change the number of building units within the building.

There is a requirement on the building owner to have an EPC for their property when it is required. Before a building is made available for sale or rent, the relevant person must ensure that an EPC is issued for their building. The relevant person or a person acting on his behalf (eg estate agent) shall show, free of charge, a valid EPC to any prospective buyer or tenant when the prospective buyer or tenant first makes an enquiry about a building. A copy of the EPC must also be handed over by the relevant person, free of charge, whenever the building is sold, rented or when works are completed.

There is no requirement to provide an EPC where a building is to be sold or rented out where the relevant person can show that following the sale or rental, the building is to be demolished or subject to a major renovation or he believes on reasonable grounds that the prospective buyer or tenant of the building intends to demolish the building or undertake a major renovation of the building. Although once the new owner carries out the renovation works or builds a new building then the new owner must provide an EPC.

There is a requirement where a building or building unit is offered for sale or rent that the relevant person, or where a person is acting on his behalf that person, shall ensure that the energy performance indicator of the building as expressed in the EPC is stated in any advertisement for sale or rent of the building in any commercial media. The energy performance indicator is the EPC bar graph.

There is a responsibility on the occupier of any non domestic building which is frequently visited by the public and is over 500m2 to display an EPC if an EPC has been issued for that building as a requirement under the regulations.

An EPC is valid for ten years and can only be produced by a competent and accredited energy assessor, for details of energy assessors in your area check local press or visit [www.niepcregister](http://www.niepcregister/)nd.com

The following types of buildings are exempt under EPB legislation, and do not require an EPC:

* Places of worship;
* Temporary buildings with a planned lifetime of less than two years;
* Industrial sites or workshops;
* Non-residential agricultural buildings with low energy demand;
* Stand alone buildings with a useful floor area of less than 50m² which

are not dwellings.

**Display Energy Certificates**

Similar to EPCs, Display Energy Certificates (DECs) provide an energy performance rating A to G for public sector buildings. Unlike EPCs the DECs take into account how the building is being used, and takes the previous year’s energy usage of the building into account.

A DEC is required for all publicly funded buildings that have a total useful floor area of over 500m² and are frequently visited by members of the public. This floor area will reduce from 500m² to 250m² on the 9th July 2015.

The DEC must be displayed in a prominent place within the building and be clearly visible to the public. A DEC is only valid for one year and must be updated annually.

A DEC must be accompanied by an advisory report which provides recommendations on how to improve the energy performance rating of the building. The advisory report is valid for seven years and does not need to be displayed to the public.

A DEC can only be produced by a competent and accredited energy assessor who is accredited to produce DECs. For details of energy assessors in your area check local press or visit [www.niepcregister](http://www.niepcregister/)nd.com

**Inspection of Air Conditioning Systems**

An air conditioning system with an output rating of more than 12kW must be inspected at regular intervals not exceeding five years. The air-conditioning inspection report must include an assessment of the air-conditioning system’s efficiency and the sizing of the system compared to the cooling requirements of the building, and give advice on possible improvements to the system, replacement of the system and alternative solutions.

It is the responsibility of the ‘relevant person’ to ensure that the building they are responsible for has the necessary air conditioning inspection report. The ‘relevant person’ will be the person who controls the operation of the system.

If you control the operation of an air-conditioning system affected by these Regulations, it is your responsibility to:

·    Ensure an inspection has been carried out in accordance with the legislation.

·    Keep the most recent Air Conditioning Inspection Report produced by the energy assessor for inspection.

·    Give any inspection report in your possession to any person taking over your   responsibilities with respect to the control of the air-conditioning system.

If you have taken over control of an air-conditioning system and you haven’t been given an inspection report, you must ensure the system is inspected within three months of taking over such control.

An inspection can only be performed by a competent and accredited energy assessor who is qualified to inspect air-conditioning systems.

For details of energy assessors in your area check local press or visit [www.niepcregister](http://www.niepcregister/)nd.com

**Energy Assessors**

Energy Assessors must be properly trained and qualified and members of a government accreditation body. These bodies will maintain a list of their members and should be able to provide contact details of assessors local to any BT Postcode. You will need an accredited assessor that is qualified in the specific area of work to be carried out, for example a DEC assessor can only carry out DEC energy assessments.

The energy assessor will need to inspect your property, take measurements and gather information on the building. They will then use a specialised computer program to calculate the energy rating of the property. Depending on the size, for a house most assessments take about one hour and costs will vary from about £50-£100. Other properties may take longer to assess and costs will also vary depending on the complexity and area of the building.

The national register of accredited energy assessors is available on landmark

[www.niepcregister.com](http://www.niepcregister.com/) for domestic properties and [www.niepcregisternd.com](http://www.niepcregisternd.com) for non domestic properties.

If you don’t have internet access you can find a list of EPB assessors in the Yellow Pages under ‘energy assessors’.

**Finding an Energy Assessor**

**Accessing the LANDMARK Site**

1. Any search engine i.e Google – type in [www.niepcregister.com](http://www.niepcregister.com)
2. To access the appropriate link, Choose type of Energy assessor required i.e. Domestic; ‘click here’
3. Go to ‘Find a domestic energy assessor’ – ‘click here’
4. Main menu displayed – enter fields; ignore first 7 fields; go to

Report Required: This defaults to ‘Energy Performance Certificate

Full Postcode of Property: Enter in Caps the ‘BT’ postcode of the property

Display Northern Ireland Based Assessors Only: Just ‘Tick box’

1. Then ‘click’ on ‘Find Nearest Energy Assessor’ : A list of 20 local energy

Assessors will now appear.

**Enforcement Penalties**

Local Authorities have the legal authority to fine individuals if they fail to provide a relevant Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), Display Energy Certificate (DEC) or Air conditioning Inspection Report (ACIR).

Energy Performance Certificates

The owner of any domestic building or building unit can be fined £200 if an EPC is not issued for their building or building unit that is offered for sale/rent, newly constructed or altered. For non-domestic properties the penalty is 12.5 % of the rateable value of the building, with a default penalty of £750 where this formula cannot be applied. The penalties range from £500 to a maximum of £5000.

A fine of £200 can also be issued to the owner or to any agent working on his or her behalf if the EPC indicator is not displayed on all advertisement in any commercial media relating to the building.

Display of EPC

A £500 penalty will be enforced on the occupier of a building for not displaying an EPC is one is required.

Display Energy certificates

The occupier of a public building can be fined £500 for failing to display a valid DEC at all times in a prominent place clearly visible to the public and fined £1000 for failing to possess or have in his/her control a valid advisory report.

Air Conditioning Report

The penalty for failing to have a valid air-conditioning inspection report is at present fixed at £300.

**Contact Information**

Contact the EPB team on free phone 0800223004 or contact your local council’s Building Control office.

Department of Finance & Personnel (DFPNI) website:

[www.dfpni.gov.uk/energy-performance-of-buildings](http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/energy-performance-of-buildings)

BCNI website

[www.buildingcontrol-ni.com](http://www.buildingcontrol-ni.com)