

Client Guide – Domestic Energy Assessments

Key Points

- ✓ All domestic properties require an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) to be provided to prospective buyers or tenants when marketed for sale or rent.
- ✓ The EPC provides information on the energy efficiency and projected carbon emissions of a property.
- ✓ All EPCs will be produced by accredited Domestic Energy Assessors (DEAs) using RdSAP software.
- ✓ In order to join an accreditation scheme, a candidate must first gain an approved qualification in Domestic Energy Assessment.

Why do we need to energy rate properties?

Climate change is becoming an increasing concern, both in the UK and worldwide. The Government seeks to change attitudes by raising awareness; by giving home owners consistent information on the energy efficiency of their properties. The Government's aim is to stimulate improvement in thermal performance of the housing stock in the UK.

Energy Ratings provide a measure of the fuel cost and CO₂ emissions of a property, similar to the miles-per-gallon and exhaust emission figures published for new cars. Everyone wins with energy conservation; the householder spends less on fuel, the Government meets its targets and scarce resources are conserved, however there is considerable scope for improvement.

At the time of writing, more than 75% of cavity walls in existing dwellings remain un-insulated, more than 60% of loft spaces have less than 100mm of loft insulation and most heating systems are poorly controlled with low efficiency.

What is a SAP Rating?

SAP stands for the Standard Assessment Procedure for the Energy Rating of Dwellings. It has been devised as a simple and easy to understand method of measuring the overall energy efficiency of a property and is the Governments recommended system for producing a home energy rating.

The SAP is related to the Energy Cost Factor (ECF), based on the calculated annual energy cost for lighting, space heating and water heating for a square metre of floor space.

SAP ratings are from one to 100, a low rating indicates high cost per square metre and a high rating low costs.

RdSAP and Full SAP

The full SAP is used in the Building Regulations and has to be calculated for every new home built. It is based on a detailed study of building plans, assessing design, construction materials and specifications. Such detail is rarely available for existing buildings and therefore RdSAP (Reduced data SAP) has been developed for DECC (the Department of Environment and Climate Change) to provide a consistent method for delivering a SAP rating from a purely visual inspection of an existing home.

RdSAP should not be used for dwellings being constructed or recently constructed or those that have never been occupied since construction or conversion. The full SAP methodology is used for newly built dwellings, including those dwellings created by conversion (change of use) of an existing building and only On Construction Domestic Energy Assessors (OCDEAs) can undertake this work.

Since 6th April 2008 in England and Wales and 30th September 2008 in Northern Ireland, on completion of a new dwelling (either as a newly constructed dwelling or as a conversion from a non-dwelling to a dwelling e.g. barn, chapel, mill, pub etc), it must have an On-Construction SAP calculation and an On-Construction EPC produced from the full SAP calculation.

The EPCs current format clearly shows the type of EPC it is, existing dwelling or newly built. This is found at the top right-hand side of the first page and also on page two of the EPC, under the section titled 'About this document'.

Note: Both existing building and on construction EPCs have a life of 10 years.

Who can carry out a Domestic Energy Assessment?

Only qualified DEA assessors can perform these assessment and lodge the EPC with the Governments Register. The assessor should be a member of an appropriate accreditation scheme, for Survey 7 Ltd. that scheme is "Elmhurst Energy".

The accreditation schemes aid in ensuring assessors are fit and proper for the works, have suitable Professional Indemnity Insurance, and perform quality assessments on a sample of each assessors lodgements.

Buildings that do not need an EPC (Exemptions)

These include:

- ✓ Places of worship.
- ✓ Temporary buildings that will be used for less than 2 years.
- ✓ Stand-alone buildings with total useful floor space of less than 50 square metres.
- ✓ Industrial sites, workshops and non-residential agricultural buildings that do not use a lot of energy.
- ✓ Some buildings that are due to be demolished.
- ✓ Holiday accommodation that's rented out for less than 4 months a year or is let under a licence to occupy.
- ✓ Listed buildings - you should get advice from your local authority conservation officer if the work would alter the building's character.
- ✓ Residential buildings intended to be used less than 4 months a year.

Listed Buildings

There are **no** special requirements for listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas, they are assessed the same as any other property. We have the following advice for owners of listed properties:

- ✓ They should commission an Elmhurst member to undertake an energy assessment and issue an EPC. The energy assessor should not switch off any recommendations, unless directly given written guidance by the Local Authority Conservation Officer stating that the specific recommendation would "unacceptably alter the properties character or appearance".
- ✓ The owner should review the recommendations and be encouraged to consider making cost effective improvements that will reduce energy consumption and make the building more comfortable.
- ✓ Where there are improvements that may impact on planning conditions then the advice of the local authority conservation officer should always be sought.
- ✓ Furthermore, where the property is subject to the minimum requirement of Private Rented Sector (PRS) or Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES), and the minimum standard cannot be achieved because of planning restrictions, then this could be used to justify an exemption.

Further information can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/buy-sell-your-home/energy-performance-certificates>