

BENCH & MARKING REPORTING

Benchmarking, or tracking a building's energy performance, gives owners and managers a better sense of how their buildings are using—and wasting—energy and also helps identify cost-effective opportunities to lower energy use and save money.

What is the benchmarking ordinance?

The Seattle Building Energy Benchmarking and Reporting Program (Ordinance 123226) requires commercial and multifamily building owners to conduct annual energy performance tracking through the U.S. EPA's Energy Star Portfolio Manager, a free and secure online benchmarking tool. The Seattle program includes three components:

Benchmarking Building owners are required to benchmark the energy performance of their buildings.

Disclosure Upon request, building owners must provide building energy performance information to any current or prospective tenant, buyer, or lender involved with a real estate or financing transaction.

Reporting Building energy performance information must be reported to the City of Seattle annually.

Program outcomes

- Lower energy costs to owners and tenants
- Job opportunities in the green economy
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions

How does this practice benefit owners?

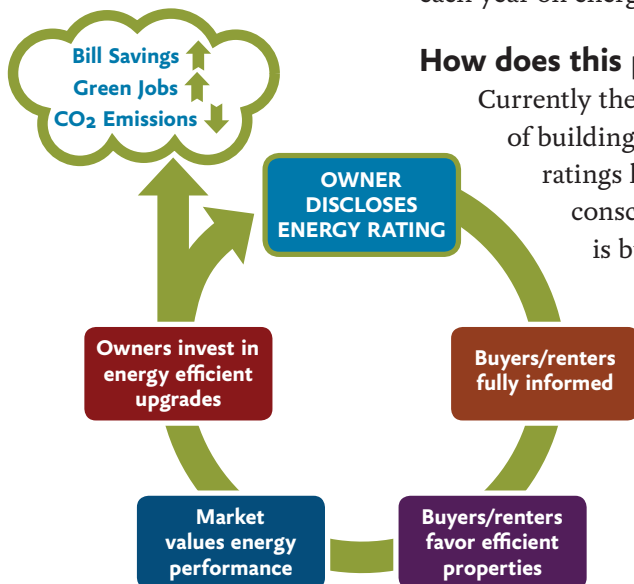
Energy is one of the biggest expenses of building ownership, and is often one that owners have the most control over. Commercial buildings could be made up to 50% more energy efficient with currently available products and technologies. However, many owners and property managers do not know how well or poorly their buildings are performing and therefore don't know what steps to take to improve building efficiency. Consequently, many owners and managers are spending thousands more each year on energy than they need to be.

How does this policy benefit consumers and businesses?

Currently there is no standardized way for consumers to compare the energy use of buildings. Similar to miles-per-gallon (MPG) ratings of cars, building energy ratings help consumers and business owners make more informed and cost conscious decisions when buying or renting property. In many cases, it is business-owners or tenants that pay the energy bills, not the building owner, so having access to energy ratings helps business owners large and small find office space with lower energy use and costs. This policy will also benefit the local economy by creating jobs in the energy services and construction trades.

Why has the city adopted this policy?

Energy used in buildings accounts for almost 26% of Seattle's greenhouse gas emissions. Much of that energy goes wasted because buildings aren't as efficient as they could be.



This policy is one of the programs recommended by stakeholders to achieve a 20% reduction in the energy consumption in existing buildings, thereby lowering energy costs to owners and tenants, creating job opportunities in the green economy, and reducing greenhouse gas impacts.

Measurement and reporting of building energy performance will help Seattle achieve these objectives, as the greater availability of information will make comparative energy consumption a market differentiator, encouraging voluntary efficiency investments. In addition, the City of Seattle and utility partners will be able to target incentive dollars by geographic or market sectors, to further reduce the energy consumption of our existing building stock.

When do I need to comply?

Non-residential buildings 50,000+ sf are required to report by October 3, 2011, and annually on April 1st thereafter.

Buildings 10,000+ sf (including multi-family of five units or more) are required to report annually starting April 1, 2012.

How is the City enforcing this policy?

The City's primary goal is to help building owners successfully comply and identify opportunities for energy efficiency improvements. Therefore, our initial focus is on providing free training and technical resources to assist with compliance. However, the City has the legal authority to assess fines of up to \$500 per day for non-compliance if necessary.

What information do I have to enter?

To develop a complete picture of a building's performance, benchmarking relies on two types of input:

- 1. A description of the building's size and operating characteristics**—hours of operation, types of uses, etc. This must be input by each building owner.
- 2. Energy consumption**—the total electric, gas and steam energy supplied to the building. This can be input manually by the building owner, or uploaded, upon request, by each utility. Local utilities now offer automated benchmarking to transfer summarized building energy consumption data directly into a building owner's Portfolio Manager account, eliminating time consuming monthly manual data updates.

How do I get started?

- Refer to the Director's Rule 6-2011 for requirements
- Use the U.S. EPA's data collection worksheet to capture building information
- View the pre-recorded training webinar
- Download our detailed step-by-step How to Guide
- Join the program listserv for training notices

These and other resources are available at www.seattle.gov/dpd/EnergyBenchmarking.

Need more help?

Free technical assistance is available via e-mail: energybenchmarking@seattle.gov or phone: 206.727.8484.