

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) for self-catering

Energy series - Save money and cut carbon

Recent clarification on legal requirements specify that self-catering properties (i.e. individual holiday homes, rented out in their entirety as specific properties to groups of people) are required to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) in place. This factsheet provides an introduction to EPCs, what's involved in getting one, how to potentially improve your property's performance, and further advice and potential funding available.

What is an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)?

EPCs tell you how energy efficient a building is, giving it a rating from A (very efficient) to G (inefficient), similar to the ratings seen on appliances. EPCs give an indication of how costly a building could be to heat and light, and what its carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are.

It also highlights cost-effective ways to achieve a better rating and states what the energy-efficiency rating could be if these improvements are made. The suggestions will contribute to improving your building's rating, and in most instances, can lead to energy savings, which will be reflected in your bills.

EPCs are valid for 10 years from when they are issued.

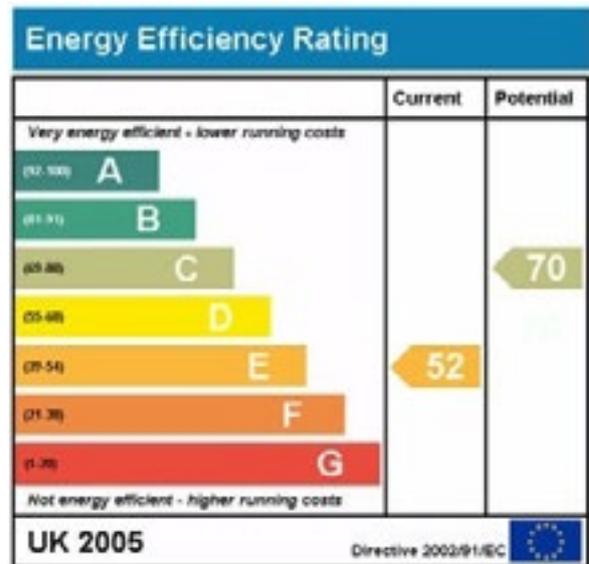
Who can provide me with the EPC for my building? What will it cost?

The assessment should be undertaken by a qualified and accredited Energy Assessor (domestic or commercial), who will visit your property to do the EPC survey.

EPCs tend to cost up to £150, although the price is much lower than this for most properties. You may want to get some quotes and shop around for the best deal, but make sure it is a registered assessor and a member of a professional organisation like the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

Please note, commercial or non-domestic EPCs are available and might be required or desirable in some circumstances. It is recommended to get advice specific to your site. The cost for these would be higher.

You can search for an EPC assessor near you through the Scottish EPC Register.
scottishepcregister.org.uk/assessorsearch



What will the energy assessor consider for the EPC survey?

The energy assessor will need to visit your property to collect the relevant information for the EPC survey, which takes around 60 minutes.

The assessor needs access to every room in the property and will look to do a head and shoulder inspection of any loft spaces, where relevant and possible.

The assessor will take notes of the following:

- Size of the living space
- Construction of the property (incl. age and materials)
- Any insulation (wall, roof and floor)
- Lighting (fixed fittings only)
- Heating system and heating controls

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How can I improve the property's performance?

As part of the EPC you will get recommendations specifically for your property on how its energy efficiency could be improved and the overall rating.

Opportunities to improve the overall energy efficiency and rating of the property can assist in reducing the energy consumption and cost when in use by guests.

Especially if you include the cost of energy in your overall price for guests, as recommended, it will help to make your property as efficient and cost effective to run as possible.

Some energy efficiency measures may be quite easy and relatively low cost to implement and it would be worth considering putting these in place before you have your EPC survey done (e.g. low energy lighting and loft insulation).

Other measures may be more expensive and better to consider longer term or to combine with other major renovation work.

This factsheet provides an outline of what the energy assessors would be looking for and what actions you could consider. We have provided links to some further information and advice.

For specialist advice and information on any financial support available for implementing these energy efficiency measures contact the Energy Efficiency Business Support team at Zero Waste Scotland. 0808 8082268

www.energy.zerowastescotland.org.uk

TOP TIP

Check if your property already has an EPC!

You can search for and retrieve an EPC by postcode on the Scottish EPC Register
scottishepcregister.org.uk



Lighting

The energy assessor counts the number of light fittings you have, and the number of low energy light bulbs you use. Low Energy light bulbs are the Compact Fluorescent or LED type or normal fluorescent tube type. Only fixed fittings are included in the EPC survey.

Fitting low energy lighting is highly recommended as it can save energy on a day-to-day basis when the property is in use. If it is cost prohibitive to change the lighting throughout the property all at once, then it would be best to prioritise those areas where lights are used most.

Make sure you consider any external lighting your property has and if there is an opportunity to make good use of automatic lighting controls (e.g. light and/or motion sensors).

For a quick introduction to **low energy lighting** and **lighting controls** take a look at our factsheets on VisitScotland.org or find more information on **lighting** on the Energy Saving Trust website.

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Insulation

The energy assessor carries out a head and shoulder inspection of your loft space, where relevant and possible. This is to check how much loft insulation is present and where it is located, either laid on the joists or affixed to the rafters. The current recommendation is to have 270mm of loft insulation laid at the joists.

If your loft is easy to access, does not have damp problems and is not a flat roof, it should be easy to insulate. This can be done by someone competent in DIY or a professional installer.

The assessor will also be looking to find out if the building has cavity walls and if any insulation has been added, as well as any potential floor insulation. This may not be easy to see, so if any work has been done in these areas, it is recommended you have documented evidence to hand.



Windows

The energy assessor makes a visual inspection of the windows to find out if it is single, double, triple glazed or has secondary glazing. If there is double-glazing, they check if it was installed before or after 2002. If your property has a conservatory, this will also be inspected.

It is worth checking your property for draughts. When your property is draught-free, your heating system doesn't have to work so hard. Draught proofing can be a cheap and effective way of saving some energy and improving overall comfort for guests as well.

For a quick introduction to insulation, glazing and draught proofing opportunities see our **Keeping Cosy Fact Sheet** on VisitScotland.org or visit the Energy Saving Trust website for information on **insulation**, **energy efficient glazing** and **draught proofing**.

Heating and Heating Controls

The largest parts of the calculation for the EPC is your property's heating system. If you have one or more boilers, it is useful to have the model name, number and the handbook for that model to hand for the energy assessor.

The energy assessor also takes note of the time and heat controls, including room thermostats and thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) fitted in your property. Any other form of heating such as coal, log, or gas coal-effect fire are also recorded.

Heating can account for more than 40% of total energy use. By controlling your heating better, you could not only be saving money but improving guests comfort. In self-catering properties, you have little direct control over the heating when guests are in, so it is important you provide guests with clear information on how to operate the controls and make best use of any automatic controls.

For a quick introduction to **heating controls** and **boiler controls** see our factsheets on VisitScotland.org or visit the Energy Saving Trust website for information on **thermostats and heating controls**.

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Some questions the assessor may ask you if the information is not obvious

- When was the property built? When were any extensions and conversions made?
- If you converted the loft into a room, when was the work carried out?
- Has the property been inspected for, or does it have any cavity wall insulation?
- Have you added any double glazing windows or doors very recently?
- Does the property have any under-floor insulation? Can this be seen, or do you have the receipts for this work?
- Are you on a single or double electricity meter?

TOP TIP

If you have made upgrades or improvements to things that cannot be easily seen then best to provide the assessor with documented evidence.

What should I do with the EPC once I get it?

It is a requirement under law that the EPC must be 'affixed' within the property. Building standards guidance suggests the EPC be located in the boiler or meter cupboard. A copy should be retained with other legal papers relating to your property.

It is also required to include a mention of your EPC rating in any advertisements or promotional materials (printed and on-line). For existing promotion, this can be included when you renew or update the content. This includes brochures, advertisements in media, your website, and on-line business listings with booking platforms.

Advice & Support

For more information on **Energy Performance Certificates** see the Scottish Government website gov.scot/publications/energy-performance-certificates-introduction/

Resource Efficient Scotland (RES), a programme of Zero Waste Scotland, can provide free advice and unsecured, interest-free loans to SMEs interested in implementing recommendations within the EPC. Please note the domestic EPC would be accepted as supporting evidence for an SME loan application through RES.

For further assistance to identify new energy saving opportunities, to access financial support and benefit from technical expertise, contact the Energy Efficiency Business Support team at Zero Waste Scotland. 0808 8082268.

www.energy.zerowastescotland.org.uk

For more information and advice on what other sustainability actions you can undertake to benefit your business see **our information on Responsible Tourism** at VisitScotland.org.

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