

Building owners have less than a year to secure EPCs

South African building owners have less than a year left to obtain and prominently display an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) or risk a fine of R5m, five years imprisonment or both. The regulations, under the National Energy Act, require that owners of four categories of buildings must obtain an EPC, which in general terms, gives a building a rating based on the amount of energy consumed per square metre.



Source: www.pexels.com

The South African National Energy Development Institute (Sanedi), which maintains an EPC register on behalf of the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), has urged building owners to take all necessary steps to comply with EPC regulations, emphasising that compliance affords them, and the country a range of benefits.

Motivation for more energy efficiency measures

Sanedi general manager for energy efficiency Barry Bredenkamp says compliance with EPC regulations will enable building owners to identify where they could introduce energy efficiency measures that would, in turn, save them money and possibly increase the value of their buildings. “An energy efficient building is generally a better environment in which to work and is significantly less expensive to run, so an owner can potentially justify a higher price if they want to sell or impose a higher rental for office space,” explains Bredenkamp.

“The more energy efficient buildings become, the more they will contribute to taking electricity demand off the national grid. This could help to ease loadshedding, and by reducing carbon emissions, building owners will be helping our country to meet its international obligations to combat climate change.”



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2 Sep 2021



Categories that need to comply

The categories that currently need to comply are offices, entertainment facilities, educational institution buildings, and places of public assembly, such as sporting facilities and community centres. The regulations apply to government buildings of more than 1,000m² and privately-owned buildings of more than 2,000m². An accurate figure of the number of buildings covered by the regulations is not available but Bredenkamp says estimates vary between 150,000 and 250,000 buildings that need to comply with the regulations.

An EPC rates buildings on a scale of A to G in a similar way to how appliances are rated for their energy efficiency. A D-rating is the benchmark rating that is in line with the national building regulations. An EPC must be prominently displayed in the foyer of a building.

“The regulations do provide penalties for any particular rating lower than an A-rating, but the primary objective in obliging building owners to obtain EPCs is to make them aware of their energy consumption and encourage them to be more energy efficient if their EPC rating is poor,” explains Bredenkamp.



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Reducing carbon emissions

“Buildings are responsible for between 30% and 40% of carbon emissions worldwide. EPC programmes are commonplace in many parts of the world and some cases even extend right down to the level of residential buildings, and they are one of many energy efficiency measures currently being implemented to drive down fossil fuel consumption and carbon emissions worldwide.

“We had cause to celebrate when South Africa introduced EPC international best-practice a year ago, and we are hoping that many more of our building owners will see the value in energy efficiency.”

Bredenkamp adds that the process of obtaining an EPC has significant job creation potential. “An EPC must be issued by a South African National Accreditation System accredited inspection body. With many thousands of buildings to be rated, inspection bodies will almost certainly need to employ significant numbers of individuals to assist them in gathering the required data, measurements and related information, for their final review and sign-off.”

For more information on the EPC regulations, click [here](#).

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