



Questions and Answers on Energy Audits

What is an Energy Audit?

An energy audit is the professionally delivered service of having the energy efficiency of your buildings evaluated. The aim is to suggest opportunities for using less energy for heating and cooling. Part of the process is looking at your co-op's bills for electricity, natural gas and water.

The audit may also check the efficiency, physical condition and programming of thermostats and heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment and other mechanical systems.

An energy audit is often used to identify cost-effective ways of improving the comfort and efficiency of buildings. Sometimes an energy audit is needed in order to qualify for a government grant.

An energy audit will show you what actions you can take to ensure you are maximizing your opportunities to save energy and money. These recommendations will range from simple things you can do yourself to strategically installing or replacing equipment, and on to more extensive home improvements that mean big changes in the your home's energy use. But remember, without action, an energy audit is just data!

How much does an energy audit cost?

The cost of an energy audit is between \$2,000 and \$4,000, depending on the size and complexity of the site. The Agency has a standing offer with a number of firms, so let us know if you're interested and we'll get you some quotes.

How long will the actual audit process take?

The energy auditor will need access to the building for approximately six to 10 hours over the course of two or three days. The auditor will also talk to staff about building components and would want to look at the building plans.

How long before the audit report is ready?

Analysis of the data collected and preparation of your report takes about one week. You will receive your energy-audit report within two to three weeks after the inspection.

What information do I need to provide?

You would need to share energy bills for the past few years in order to see how power is being consumed. Blueprints and other plans are optional but recommended because they make possible a more thorough audit.

What size of building can the audit be performed on?

An energy audit can take place for any size of building. However, if the building is very large, the audit will require longer to complete and would have to be performed on a day when the energy auditors have a great deal of time available.

Do residents and staff need to vacate the building during the audit process?

No, the audit can be performed with residents and staff on the premises. Their presence is recommended so they can answer questions about energy usage. The auditor will look at a sample of approximately 10 % of units.

What parts the building (i.e., basements, rooftops) would the audit need access to?

Energy auditors need access to all equipment that consumes power, and particularly to the HVAC system in the mechanical room. Roof access is also needed to investigate the potential for a photovoltaic system.

Are tax credits and rebates available for installing more energy-efficient systems?

From time to time, different levels of government announce programs that offer rebates for retrofitting homes and making them more energy efficient. Some utility companies also offer incentives. As these programs come and go, it is best to do an Internet search.

Should we get new windows first?

Sometimes replacing windows does not provide the increase in energy savings that might be expected. Other less expensive or higher-impact changes can do more to accomplish this goal. An energy audit will help you determine where on your action list replacing windows should fall.

Our co-op can't afford any of the recommendations. What do we do?

Add the items to your Capital Reserve Plan in order to spread the cost over a number of years. If you don't have a plan in place, you might also consider doing a building condition assessment (BCA) and a Capital Reserve Plan. For more information on Capital Replacement Reserve Plans, read our Q&A on Capital Replacement Reserve Plans.

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