

# Denver's Energy Efficiency Ordinance: Frequently Asked Questions

## ***What would the proposed benchmarking and transparency ordinance require?***

All buildings (commercial, multifamily, institution, and municipal) over 25,000 square feet would be required to benchmark their energy performance annually using the free [ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager](#) tool. This tool results in a 1-100 performance score (where 50 is the national average). Building owners would then be required to report that score to the City each year, and the City would use those scores as the basis of outreach and education to building owners on opportunities to improve their buildings' energy efficiency. The scores would be made public each year to drive further market awareness of energy efficiency.

## ***When do buildings have to comply?***

- June 1, 2017 - All municipal buildings of at least 25,000 square feet; owners of non-municipal buildings (institutional, commercial, and multifamily residential) of at least 50,000 square feet must comply no later than June 1, 2017, and each June 1 thereafter.
- June 1, 2018 - All non-municipal buildings (institutional, commercial, and multifamily residential) of at least 25,000 square feet

## ***How much could benchmarking cost?***

ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager is a free tool. It takes 4-8 hours to set-up an account for a building and 1-2 hours of staff time to enter data annually. Xcel Energy now offers to [automatically upload energy bill data to Portfolio Manager](#) for building owners, so the annual reporting time should actually be less than the 1-2 hour estimate because the account should update automatically once that is set up.

## ***What would the penalty for not complying with the ordinance be?***

The penalty is \$2,000. Our primary goal is compliance, and our efforts will always be focused first on helping property owners achieve that goal.

## ***What buildings are exempted from the policy?***

Industrial and agricultural buildings, buildings with low occupancy, buildings in financial distress, and buildings that can demonstrate confidential business use are exempted.

## ***What incentives and financing options can help owners pay for improvements?***

Xcel Energy has many energy efficiency incentives. All Xcel Energy incentives can be found in its business programs summary, available online at <https://www.xcelenergy.com/staticfiles/xcel/Marketing/Files/CO-Business-Program-Summary.pdf>. Department of Environmental Health staff will work with Xcel to ensure continued incentives.

Denver will also be enrolling in the Property Assessed Clean Energy program (PACE). PACE enables owners of eligible commercial and industrial buildings to finance up to 100% of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation improvements. For details on the C-PACE program, go to [www.copace.com](http://www.copace.com).

### ***How will the City help owners comply?***

The City and its partners would provide education and training resources as well as an on-call help center to help owners comply with the ordinance. The help center would provide technical help by phone as well as in-person with office hours and consultations. The City would also set up a user-friendly website making the compliance process clear with several resources to help building owners. The education and training would include online and in-person training and tips for owners on how to benchmark and how to develop a plan to make improvements or upgrades should they choose to do so.

### ***What is the City going to do with my building's benchmarking data?***

ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager scores for every building over 25,000 square feet shall be published publically each year in a searchable database and clickable map. The data will not be downloadable as a whole data set. The City will be allowed to share the data set with Xcel Energy for the purpose of targeting its Demand Side Management programs.

### ***Should I have any privacy concerns?***

There are no privacy concerns with most annual energy usage data that would be reported to the City under this ordinance. Annual energy usage data is the least sensitive type of energy data. The City would not receive any real time, interval, or monthly data under the ordinance. The City also would not receive individual tenant or resident data, only whole building energy data.

### ***How would a benchmarking ordinance affect older or historic buildings?***

Throughout the cities that have already passed a benchmarking and transparency policy, there is no correlation between a building's age and their ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager score. In fact, benchmarking data collected in New York City and Seattle found that older buildings, on the whole, perform better than newer buildings on energy use intensity and benchmarking scores.

### ***What other cities have benchmarking and transparency requirements?***

There are 18 cities and counties. Atlanta; Austin; Berkley; Boston; Boulder; Cambridge; Chicago; Kansas City MO; Minneapolis; Montgomery County, Md.; New York City; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; Portland, ME; Portland OR; Seattle; San Francisco; and Washington D.C.

### ***Are these policies effective in other cities?***

Yes. Two percent to three percent savings each year was seen in [New York](#), [San Francisco](#) and [Washington, D.C](#) from owners taking action after a benchmarking and transparency law was put in place. (These three cities that have required benchmarking and transparency for the longest). This is a significant amount of energy savings across a large portfolio of buildings.

### ***Why use ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager?***

ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager is the industry standard tool for benchmarking energy use in buildings. This tool is already used by over 450,000 buildings nationwide of all types, covering about half of the commercial floorspace in the country.