



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Making Better use of Energy Performance of Buildings Data

Privacy Notice



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If you have any enquiries regarding this document/publication, complete the form at <http://forms.communities.gov.uk/> or write to us at:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
Telephone: 030 3444 0000

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Privacy Notice

Introduction

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) issued for buildings are lodged on the Energy Performance of Buildings Register¹ (the register) as a requirement of the Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/3118²), as amended (the Regulations).

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (the department) appreciates the value of information about the energy performance of buildings and believes it is in the public interest to make the data from the EPC and some of the information collected as part of the energy assessment publicly available. Information which is held on the register may also be shared with specified bodies for the purposes specified in the Regulations. Further information about the ways in which EPCs and other data held on the register are made available to others is set out below.

The department recognises that some holders of EPCs for domestic and non-domestic buildings may have concerns about information relating to their buildings being made public. The Regulations permit holders of EPCs to 'opt-out' of having the data from their certificates disclosed publicly. Further details about the opt-out, including how to opt out, are set out below.

Public access to the EPC

The online search function allows anyone to input the address, or postcode, of the building to retrieve an EPC for a domestic and non-domestic building if there is one, unless the owner or occupier has opted out. Where the owner or occupier of the building has exercised the opt-out, an EPC can only be retrieved, via the online search function, if the person inputs the report reference number, provided to them by the energy assessor, or by someone already in possession of the EPC (for example, the seller, the landlord or estate agent). EPCs have been available online since 2007.

Public access to energy performance of buildings data in bulk format

As well as allowing access to individual EPCs, the amended regulations³ allow the publication on a website of what is referred to as bulk access data. Previously, bulk access data was only available to a limited number of 'authorised' recipients. The term bulk access data includes both the data which can be found on the face of an EPC and the underlying data, held on the register, which is used to produce an EPC. The term bulk access data is also used to refer to data records for multiple buildings in one electronic file. Except where

¹ <https://find-energy-certificate.digital.communities.gov.uk/>

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/3118/regulation/31/made>

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/284/regulation/18/made>

an EPC holder opts-out, certain bulk data items for domestic and non-domestic buildings are available online to the public on the open data communities' website⁴. Further information, including a list of the data items which are publicly available and a privacy impact assessment, are available on the department's website⁵.

The data contains address data in which the Royal Mail Group Limited has intellectual property rights, therefore, data users are required to comply with the terms of a Royal Mail copyright notice⁶ which limits the purposes for which the data can be used to purposes relating to the energy efficiency of buildings.

Opting out of having your EPC and the underlying data made publicly available

The owner or occupier of the building to which the data relates may opt-out of having the EPC and the underlying data made publicly available by notifying the department that the data is not to be disclosed. The owner or occupier may withdraw the 'opt-out' in the same way. Both may be done by contacting the register helpdesk (details below). In order to validate your 'opt-out' or 'opt-in' request you will need to provide the 20-digit report reference number of the EPC, your name and email address and your connection to the property. This information is collected to operate the opt-in and opt-out process and personal information may be retained and will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and is not disclosed by the department to any third party.

An EPC can be opted-out on the register at any time. Once the opt-out process has been completed, opt-out on the register will take place as soon as possible. However, in the bulk data your EPC can only be opted-out once future data releases are made, which are expected to be two to four times a year.

Helpdesk

Email: mhclg.digital-services@communities.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 3829 0748

Sharing of bulk access data with other bodies

The regulations allow the department to share data which is held on the register with bodies listed in the regulations for specified purposes;

- with local authorities and other enforcement bodies for enforcement purposes and the prevention and detection of crime
- with energy assessor accreditation schemes and government for quality assurance purposes

⁴ <http://opendatacommunities.org/home>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-better-use-of-energy-performance-of-buildings-data-privacy-impact-assessment>

⁶ <https://epc.opendatacommunities.org/docs/copyright>

- with government to enable it to carry out its duties under the regulations
- with government and the Office for National Statistics for statistical and research purposes. Any research or statistics derived from data shared cannot be published at address level
- with government and the Green Deal ombudsman for purposes related to the Government's Green Deal Scheme
- with government and OFGEM for purposes related to the government's renewable heat incentive scheme
- to provide energy advice using the Simple Energy Advice⁷ modelling tool

Opted-out EPCs may be shared in certain circumstances, e.g. for the prevention and detection and crime.

⁷ <https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/>