Boston's Building Energy Reporting and Disclosure Ordinance

Information on 2014 Reporting

In 2013, the City of Boston enacted the Building Energy Reporting and Disclosure Ordinance and promulgated regulations for its implementation. The ordinance requires large buildings to report their annual energy and water use and greenhouse gas emissions to the City, which will then make the information publicly available. Buildings will also be required to conduct an energy assessment or action every five years, with exemptions provided for buildings that are already efficient or making significant progress.

Energy tracking has been shown to be a key first step to understanding and reducing building energy use. Higher energy efficiency will save money for owners and tenants, strengthen Boston's economy, and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change.

Reporting Requirements in 2014

In 2014, non-residential buildings over 50,000 square feet, as listed in the Boston Assessing Department records, must report their 2013 energy and water use to the City by May 15, 2014. Any set of non-residential buildings on one tax lot totaling over 100,000 square feet is also covered. In 2015, residential buildings over 50,000 square feet or 50 units must also start reporting.

Energy Star Portfolio Manager

Buildings will be reporting their energy and water use and greenhouse gas emissions through Energy Star Portfolio Manager, a free Web-based tool developed by EPA. Building owners enter data on energy consumption, water use, and building use characteristics, which Portfolio Manager uses to assess the building's energy and greenhouse gas performance. Owners can then submit a report to the City electronically, via Portfolio Manager, to comply with the ordinance's requirements.

Whole-Building Energy Data

Because the ordinance requires data for the entire building, the utilities NSTAR, National Grid, and Veolia are making whole-building totals for electricity, natural gas, and steam available to building owners. This means that owners will not need to request energy data from individual tenants. These data services will be available by early March. Tenant permissions will be required only for buildings with three or fewer tenants, or where one tenant is responsible for more than half of the energy use (non-residential tenants are required to provide such data upon request). Information on how to obtain whole-building data will be available on the City's and the utilities' websites soon.

Resources

More information on Boston's energy reporting requirements, including a how-to guide on compliance, is available at: www.boston.gov/environmentalandenergy/conservation/BERDO.asp

Training and help with Portfolio Manager, with a help desk for user questions, are provided by EPA at portfoliomanager.energystar.gov/pm/help

Questions about energy reporting in Boston can be sent to EnergyReporting@Boston.gov.

Energy Reporting Checklist

The checklist below provides an overview of how to report building energy and water use to the City of Boston; a detailed how-to guide, with screenshots, tips, and FAQs, is available at www.boston.gov/environmentalandenergy/conservation/BERDO.asp.

As long as the data are complete before submitting, the order in which you complete these steps is flexible.

☐ 1   Collect data on water use and all types of energy used by the building, for calendar year 2013. This may include electricity, natural gas, steam, chilled water, fuel oil, or any other energy sources. You can obtain whole-building energy data from your utility, if needed.

☐ 2   Create an account in EPA's Portfolio Manager, a free, online energy tracking tool. Go to http://portfoliomanager.energystar.gov/.

☐ 3   Add your property, and enter information on building characteristics. Remember that gross floor area, as defined in Portfolio Manager, may differ from the area listed in the Assessing Records. (Details on what to include and exclude is in the How-To Guide).

☐ 4   Enter the size and details of the property uses within your building. If you don't have any of this information, you may need to request it from your tenants.

☐ 5   Set up your energy and water meters in Portfolio Manager, with the correct units. If you have whole-building data, you only need to set up one electricity meter, for example, to represent total electricity consumption.

☐ 6   Enter your energy and water use data. If you've received whole-building data from NSTAR, National Grid, or Veolia, the data is in a format that can be copied into Portfolio Manager.

☐ 7   In the "Property Notes" box in Portfolio Manager, enter any contextual information about your building's energy performance that you wish to be included in disclosures (though there will not be building-specific disclosure this year). You also need to note any use of default or estimated values, or delegation of reporting – see the how-to guide for details.

☐ 8   Add your Boston Assessing Parcel ID, under "Unique Identifiers."

☐ 9   Create your energy and water report. Import the template into your account by going to the Boston-specific Portfolio Manager link (available mid-February on our website), and generate the report. Preview your report, and then click "Send Response" to submit it.

☐ 10   Retain the confirmation email that you will receive, as well as other records related to the energy reporting process.

You can find additional forms and guides, such as for requesting tenant data or applying for an extension, and other information that may be useful at www.boston.gov/environmentalandenergy/conservation/BERDO.asp. If you have other questions, please contact us at energyreporting@boston.gov.