

City of Seattle Building Tune-Up Requirement

What is the Building Tune-Up requirement?

Owners of nonresidential buildings 50,000 square feet or greater are required to tune-up building energy and water systems every five years. A tune-up includes (a) an inspection of building systems to identify operational or maintenance issues; (b) corrections to operational issues identified in the inspection; and (c) a report to the Seattle Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE) summarizing issues identified and actions taken.

What does a tune-up include?

A tune-up is focused on operational improvements to energy and water efficiency. Research indicates a tune-up averages 10-15% energy savings and typically pays back in 2-3 years from utility bill savings. Examples of operational improvements include changes to thermostat set points, or adjusting lighting or irrigation schedules. Detailed specifications of what will be included in a tune-up is being established by Director's rule.

Who is required to comply with the requirement?

Owners of nonresidential buildings that are 50,000 square feet or greater, and commercial spaces that are 50,000 square feet or greater in mixed-use buildings, which are subject to the Energy Use Benchmarking requirement (Seattle Municipal Code 22.920). Building area is measured as gross square feet excluding parking, as recorded with the King County Assessor. Buildings may be granted an exemption from a reporting period by OSE if they meet certain criteria (see below for exemption information).

Why is the City requiring building tune-ups?

The Tune-Up policy is a key piece of [Seattle's Climate Action Plan](#), our roadmap to achieving carbon-neutrality. This policy helps ensure buildings don't use energy and water wastefully by helping optimize building operations. Reducing energy and water use helps the City save resources and move toward its goal to reduce carbon pollution.

When will the requirement go into effect?

Compliance deadlines for the tune-up requirement phase-in by building size, per the following schedule:

Building Size:	Tune-Up Report Submitted by:
200,000 square feet or greater	October 1, 2018
100,000 – 199,999 square feet	October 1, 2019
70,000 – 99,999 square feet	October 1, 2020
50,000 – 69,999 square feet	October 1, 2021

These dates indicate the deadline for completing the first required tune-up. Buildings then repeat this schedule every five years. For example, a building first required to comply in 2018 would be required to conduct their second tune-up, and submit their final tune-up report, in 2023.

Why are there both an Ordinance and a Director's Rule, and what is the role of each in establishing the tune-up requirement?

Developing the tune-up requirement is a two-step process including both an Ordinance and an OSE Director's Rule. The ordinance was adopted by the City Council and signed by the Mayor in March 2016. It specifies the basic parameters of the legislation, including who is required to comply, a basic definition of the actions required to comply, schedules for compliance, and penalties for non-compliance. It also authorizes the OSE Director to adopt rules further detailing compliance specifications that are consistent with the ordinance.

The Director's Rule defines the substantive details of the tune-up requirement, further detailing the requirements adopted in the ordinance. For example, the tune-up ordinance requires building owners to report a summary of findings and operational improvements to the City after a tune-up is conducted. The OSE Director's Rule outlines the contents of that report. The Rule provides specificity and clarifications on the following: buildings and spaces subject to the requirement; requirements for tune-up assessments, corrective actions, and reporting; requirements related to compliance extensions and exemptions; and qualifications for tune-up specialists. The proposed Rule is available for public comment through November 30, 2016.

Who qualifies for an exemption from the tune-up requirement?

There are several circumstances that would qualify a building for an exemption from a single 5-year tune-up cycle, including evidence that a building is already a high-performing building, recent work to tune-up or improve the performance of the building, or a circumstance where a tune-up is not relevant (for example, a building slated for demolition). Additional exemptions and specifications of the exemptions can be found in the proposed Director's Rule.

How do I comply, and who is qualified to conduct a tune-up?

Specifications on the actions required in a tune-up are outlined in the proposed OSE Director's Rule 2016-01.

Proposed qualifications of a tune-up specialist are also included in the proposed Rule. A person is qualified as a tune-up specialist if they have at least seven years of combined education and professional experience with building energy management and have successfully completed one of several training or certification programs identified in the proposed Rule.

How can I stay informed and be involved in the rulemaking process?

Please sign up for our mailing list at NextGenEE@seattle.gov, or contact Christie Baumel at christie.baumel@seattle.gov. Public meetings to provide feedback during the Rule development process or upon the draft rule will be provided to this mailing list and at www.seattle.gov/buildingtuneups.