

GETTING STARTED

I recently purchased a building and don't have access to previous owner or tenant data, am I required to report?

The building owner at the time of the reporting deadline (April 1, annually) is legally responsible for submitting an Energy Benchmark Report to the City of Seattle. If the building was purchased prior to the compliance deadline, Seattle City Light and Puget Sound Energy can provide the new owner retroactive whole building consumption data up to two years from the time of the request, through automated data exchange services. The building owner or authorized building owner representative will need to request utility data exchange services and in cases where there are four or fewer PSE natural gas meters, tenant authorization is required. For Seattle City Light, signatures are required if there is only a single account holder for the entire building. More information on automated data exchange is available in the Energy Benchmarking *How to Comply* guide.

Why am I required to report my energy consumption data to the City of Seattle if I'm already a Seattle City Light customer? Doesn't the City already have access to all my data?

Building owners are ultimately the only party who can confirm the complete listing of meters that serve a building. Utilities track the physical location of their meters, and the mailing address of the party paying bills, but neither of these provide a utility with the information they need to definitively determine which meters are associated with a given building. Additionally, benchmarking requires information about the use of the building and depending on the use type, various information about the number of occupants, hours of operation and other data points that may impact the overall energy performance of the facility.

Seattle utilities have developed systems (see Automated Data Exchange) to upload consumption data automatically into ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager. These services eliminate the need to manually enter energy use data for each tenant. However, the building owner or manager is still required to enroll with their utility provider for these services. Owners are also required to set up the initial profile of their property in Portfolio Manager and input space type and occupancy data according to each building's characteristics. Any major changes in the number of occupants, space-types, or other variables utilized by the ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager tool must be updated annually to provide an accurate reflection of the operating conditions of the property.

I have a new building, when is the first energy benchmarking report due?

All new buildings are required to submit their first energy benchmark report April 1st, following the first full calendar year of occupancy (January – December) after the initial Certificate of Occupancy (COO) date. For example, a building that has a COO of August 1, 2017 will be required to submit their first annual benchmarking report by April 1, 2019 (for 2018 data).

New buildings that have not received a notification letter or building ID from Office of Sustainability and Environment can submit a request for a building ID to energybenchmarking@seattle.gov.

How do I find my building ID?

The Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) has created unique building identification numbers (OSE Building ID) for properties required to comply with the Energy Benchmarking ordinance SMC 22.920. This building ID must be entered when you authorize reporting to the city through the Portfolio Manager Automated Benchmarking Console. The build-

ing identification number allows the city to download your building performance data from your Portfolio Manager account. Step 4 of the How to Comply guide explains how to enter this building ID to successfully report data to the city.

If an incorrect building ID is provided or is already in use by another entity, your building will be out of compliance with the annual energy benchmarking requirement. Building ID's already in use will be rejected by Portfolio Manager in the form of an error notice when you attempt create the reporting connection. Please note, if your building was previously owned and benchmarked by another entity, you may need to request the historic connection to the prior Portfolio Manager account be broken. Please contact our help desk at energybenchmarking@seattle.gov to assist you in the review of your building's reporting and connection status.

The majority of required buildings have submitted energy benchmark reports to the City of Seattle and therefore can find their building ID on the Energy Benchmarking Visualization Map www.seattle.gov/energybenchmarkingmap, or accessible via the Seattle Open Data Portal as a part of the annually published benchmarking data set at data.seattle.gov. Both resources have search functions to look up a building by address or building name. If you cannot find your building ID, or need a new building ID created, submit an ID request to energybenchmarking@seattle.gov. Requests for new building ID's must include the following:

- Building Name
- Building Address
- Year Built
- Non-residential square footage
- Residential square footage
- Parking square footage
- # of stories
- # of Units (for residential space only)
- Building contact (owner or management)

The City lists my building's gross square footage over 20,000 Sq. Ft. but I believe it's incorrect. How do I request an exemption?

The Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment references the legal and publicly available King County (KC) Assessor gross square footage (GSF) records when identifying buildings required to comply with the Energy Benchmarking ordinance SMC 22.920. If you believe your building's gross square footage is recorded inaccurately, you must reconcile the square footage difference through the King County Assessor Office. The square footage in a building can be updated by any of the appraisers on the Commercial Division staff. King County requires documentation in the form of building plans or measurements completed by a recognized building trade professional reflecting the correct building gross square footage; there is no charge to make a change to your building's assessment record, simply email documents to Assessor.Info@KingCounty.Gov and request your building's records be updated accordingly.

Building owners may also call 206-296-7300 and ask to speak with a commercial appraiser or email Assessor.Info@KingCounty.Gov to request a free assessment. Based on availability, a King County Assessor will remeasure your facility and update records accordingly. Once your building is recorded correctly in the King County Assessor Database, and is confirmed to be under 20,000 SF (excluding parking), you will be required to submit an exemption form with proof of your updated building tax records to be exempted from the energy benchmarking requirement.

COMPLIANCE

I don't have access to my tenants' meters, how do I complete the process?

Automated data exchange services, provided by local utilities to directly feed energy usage data into an owner's Portfolio Manager account, eliminates the need to manually input data from bills. These services preserve tenants' privacy by summarizing the entire building's energy use—building owners do not need to collect energy bills or gain permission from individual tenants. There is a minor exception for PSE gas customers only: if a building has four or less tenants who separately receive

service from PSE and are individually billed, each needs to sign a release form. The owner—and the City—will be able to see the total energy use, aggregated (summarized) across all meters serving a building. Individual tenant meter readings will not be disclosed. Step 3 of the How to Comply section explains how to set up automated data exchange services with Seattle City Light, Puget Sound Energy and Enwave.

Why did I get a notice that my account is flagged for reporting inaccurate data?

The City of Seattle reviews all submitted benchmarking reports for account accuracy. Benchmarking reports will get flagged as inaccurate if they have any of the following: extremely low or high energy use, missing fuel sources, temporary values for building space use details, or discrepancies in parking/ building square footage. If you received notice from the City that your account has been flagged for reporting inaccurate data, you are required to review your Portfolio Manager account, make any applicable corrections, and confirm accuracy with the City of Seattle. For assistance in reviewing your buildings Portfolio Manager account, email energybenchmarking@seattle.gov.

How do I know if my building is compliant?

Energy Benchmarking reports are due to the City of Seattle April 1, annually. To be considered compliant, the building must have an active Portfolio Manager account shared with City of Seattle Annual Reporting, 12 months of complete energy consumption (for all active meters) in Portfolio Manager and submit a report free of errors. Portfolio Manager accounts that are not correctly shared with the City of Seattle or are missing any months of energy consumption will not be able to successfully submit an energy benchmark report and will be considered non-compliant. Review the Compliance Checklist available at www.seattle.gov/energybenchmarking to ensure all the steps have been completed.

Am I required to achieve a certain score for compliance?

There is no mandatory requirement for making energy efficiency improvements. Although we encourage everyone to invest in all cost-effective measures, the intent of this program is to put the information about comparative energy performance results in the hands of appropriate decision makers, so that market awareness and competitiveness will drive improvements in building energy efficiency.

PORTFOLIO MANAGER

What do I do if I cannot log in using my existing Portfolio Manager Username and Password?

City of Seattle and benchmarking help desk staff cannot help with forgotten passwords or usernames in Portfolio Manager. Access to Portfolio Manager is administered by U.S. EPA, and you must contact them if you have trouble getting into your Portfolio Manager account.

If you cannot log into your existing EPA Portfolio Manager account, you can submit a request to recover your password via the EPA website: <https://portfoliomanager.energystar.gov/pm/account/help/password>.

If you do not remember the username associated with your existing Portfolio Manager account, you can retrieve your username via the EPA website: <https://portfoliomanager.energystar.gov/pm/account/help/username>.

If you do not have access to the email associated with your building's existing Portfolio Manager account, please contact the EPA by using their help request form available online at: <https://portfoliomanager.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new>.

Please note in your request that you are working to comply with the City of Seattle benchmarking law and state the reason you no longer having access to the existing Portfolio Manager account, i.e. employee left the company etc. Please note you will need to provide the PM Building ID, username and building name. Contact the benchmarking help desk at energybenchmarking@seattle.gov if you need assistance gathering this information.

Can a building's previous Portfolio Manager account be transferred to me?

An existing Portfolio Manager account can be transferred to a new entity responsible for benchmarking a required building, only if the prior account holder is willing to. Transferring a Portfolio Manager account will transfer all the buildings details and historical consumption. However, if the building had been set-up for automated utility data exchange, transferring in Portfolio Manager will break that link, and the new account holder will no longer receive energy consumption data from utility companies. The new Portfolio Manager account holder will need to re-submit consumption request enrollment forms to Seattle City Light and Puget Sound Energy, as if they were setting up this building for the first time.

How do I include parking details in Portfolio Manager?

Whether a parking lot(s) is added or not to Portfolio Manager depends on how its energy use (typically lights and ventilation) is metered.

- If the parking lot IS served by energy meter connected to a building associated with it, ADD it to Portfolio Manager as a "space use" of the building.
- If the parking lot IS NOT served by energy meter connected to a building associated with it (i.e. it is on a separate meter), DO NOT ADD it to Portfolio Manager.

When adding parking lots as a "space type" to Portfolio Manager, the total parking "gross floor area" or square footage (SF) must be allocated to at least one these categories:

1. Enclosed floor area – this area uses energy for lighting and mechanical ventilation
2. Non-enclosed floor area (with a roof) – this area uses energy for lighting, but NOT for mechanical ventilation
3. Open floor area – this area uses energy for lights but only during the night, when it is dark outside. This would typically be an outdoor lot.

Note: If you don't have 1 or more of these 3 categories, input zero "0" SF.

Weekly Hours of Access: If your lot is open 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, the weekly hours of access is 168 hours (24 x 7).

BEYOND BENCHMARKING

What are building performance profiles and where can I find mine?

Beginning with 2016 benchmarking data, building reports became available online for all reporting building types. Seattle is annually displaying building performance metrics such as the December ending EUI and ENERGY STAR score compared to similar building types in Seattle. This peer comparison highlights if the building is higher or lower than the average performing building of that type in Seattle. Additionally, a toggle view feature (provided in the upper left-hand corner of the blue banner) allows users to see where the building's Energy Use Intensity (EUI) or ENERGY STAR Score falls in comparison to others of the same type. The site defaults to Site EUI, showing the annual Dec. ending EUI as either lowest (blue), medium low (green), medium high (yellow) or highest (red) energy use. Visit www.seattle.gov/energybenchmarkingmap

What are Building Tune-Ups and do I need to comply with this regulation?

Seattle Building Tune-Ups is a progressive energy efficiency policy that helps building owners identify smart, responsible ways to reduce energy and water costs. Through Tune-Ups, building owners find operational efficiencies and low- and no-cost fixes that improve building performance and on average reduce building energy use by 10-15%. Building Tune-Ups are required every five years for buildings with 50,000 square feet (SF) or more of non-residential space, excluding parking. To support building owners, compliance deadlines will be phased in by building size, beginning in 2019. For more info visit www.seattle.gov/buildingtuneups.

DATA VERIFICATION

Why do I have to verify my benchmarking account? / Why was my building flagged?

Accurate annual reporting is a requirement per Seattle Municipal Code (22.920.120). The City identifies benchmarking reports with possible errors and requires further review of the Portfolio Manager account to verify accurate data is being reported. Possible errors are identified based on a few factors, such as extremely high or low energy metrics, a possible missing fuel compared with previous years, or drastic increases or decreases in energy data.

The verification process requires a thorough review of the account. If no errors are found the report is verified as accurate and the building is compliant. If errors are found, corrections will ensure the benchmarking data and metrics are accurate. As benchmarking is a best practice for energy management, tracking trends over time, and comparing buildings, the benefits of benchmarking cannot be realized without accurate data.

The most common types of errors found and corrected in Portfolio Manager are incorrect building square footage, incorrect benchmarking of parking square footage, incorrect property types, incorrect or missing secondary space types, missing fuel sources, missing tenant meters or automated data exchange error(s) in monthly consumption.

How do I verify my account?

If your report is flagged for verification, you must do the following:

1. Review the Data Verification Requirements worksheet and complete the required steps to verify the accuracy of your building's ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager account.
2. Review your Portfolio Manager account for errors, and update or make corrections where necessary. Account review requires research outside of Portfolio Manager and coordination with utilities if signed up for automated data exchange—this process can take up to two weeks for the research and back and forth. Tip: The Data Verification Requirements worksheet can also be used to collect the required information/data that will be necessary to submit online to fulfill your data verification requirement.
3. Complete and submit the Energy Benchmarking Data Verification online form.

Note- you must review the requirements and complete account review before submitting online. The online form requires explanations and open-ended questions that cannot be answered correctly unless the verification process has been completed.

Does this cost anything? Does a third-party have to verify my Portfolio Manager account?

At this time the City of Seattle does not require third-party review to verify the Portfolio Manager account. The verification review and submittal can be done by the account holder, building management, or building ownership. Note: if the entity reviewing the account is not a building manager or owner, they must coordinate with the building management/ownership to retrieve required information for the verification process, such as meter lists and additional space use information (such as space use types, number of workers, hours of operation, etc). Additionally, if a third-party entity is submitting the review, they must coordinate with the building management/ownership on the results of the verification, as the building owner is the responsible party for meeting compliance requirements.

If you wish to hire a third party resource to verify your account, the Northwest Energy Efficiency Council (NEEC) maintains a directory of businesses that can benchmark buildings and help owners use the building's energy data to make informed decisions about energy and money saving upgrades.

What resources are available to help me?

The Data Verification Requirements worksheet is going to be the best resource to complete the verification process. Each section includes detailed instructions, space to collect data and live links to external resources where applicable.

The Energy Benchmarking website also has compliance resources that will orient you to the benchmarking process. These range from How to Guides to training videos to walk you through the benchmarking process from start to finish. These can be found on the How to Comply page.

If you are new to benchmarking, you are encouraged to watch our “Introduction to Energy Benchmarking” training video prior to starting the verification process.

Our technical assistance staff is also available to assist in Portfolio Manager account review and to provide more in-depth guidance on how to correct errors and/or make updates to your account. If interested, send a request to set-up an appointment to energybenchmarking@seattle.gov.

I submitted a data verification form last year. Do I have to do it again this year?

Most buildings that submitted a formal data verification form for a previous reporting year benchmarking reports and received an approval from City of Seattle do not have to resubmit a verification form for future year benchmarking reports. In some cases, buildings who did receive previous approval will still have to do a verification form for current benchmark reports and beyond. For example, buildings who had an issue specific to their 2018 report such as vacancy, a utility energy data error or a broken meter.

Buildings that previously submitted a formal verification form for benchmarking reports but did not make required corrections must also submit a verification form if they have been flagged for the current reporting year, and correct outstanding errors to be considered compliant.

If you have specific questions about previous verification results and outstanding corrections please email energybenchmarking@seattle.gov with building name and ID, and “Data Verification” in the subject.