



FAQ



ENERGY STAR for Commercial Buildings

Portfolio Manager 101 Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

- Gross Floor Area (GFA)..... 2
 - Q1: What is included in Gross Floor Area (GFA)?..... 2
 - Q2: What about multi-story buildings? 2
- Parking 2
 - Q3: How do I enter parking?..... 2
 - Q4: How do I include EV charging? 2
- Certification 3
 - Q5: What are the benefits of receiving ENERGY STAR Certification? 3
 - 1. ENERGY STAR certified buildings have lower utility bills 3
 - 2. ENERGY STAR certified buildings generate 35% fewer greenhouse gas emissions..... 3
 - Q6: If I have a multi-use property, how do I know if it is eligible for ENERGY STAR Certification? 3
- Miscellaneous 4
 - Q7: What is the difference between site and source energy use intensity (EUI)? 4
 - Q8: For a campus, how do I enter buildings energy data? 4

Other questions?

www.energystar.gov/buildingshelp

Gross Floor Area (GFA)

Q1: What is included in Gross Floor Area (GFA)?

The GFA is the total property square footage, as measured between the exterior walls of the building(s). This includes all areas inside the building(s) including supporting areas.

Q2: What about multi-story buildings?

Include all floors when entering total GFA.

Refer to the following FAQs for more information:

- [What should I include in GFA?](#)
- [What are acceptable ways to measure a buildings square footage?](#)
- [I'm getting a GFA alert. Help!](#)

Parking

Q3: How do I enter parking?

Portfolio Manager can track open parking lots, partially enclosed parking garages, and completely enclosed parking garages. To [enter your parking](#), you can either sub-meter your parking and exclude the energy use and Gross Floor Area (GFA), or benchmark your parking with your building and include its energy and GFA. If you include parking with your building, it must be broken out into a separate property use and Portfolio Manager will estimate the amount of energy used.

If your parking garage is physically connected to your building, it cannot be more than 75% of the total property GFA. If your parking garage is NOT physically connected to your building, there is no limit to the size. Learn more here: [How should I enter a parking garage?](#)

Q4: How do I include EV charging?

The ENERGY STAR score is intended to provide an assessment of the building, not including any Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging stations. Therefore, you should exclude your EV Charging stations when benchmarking if you can.

- If your EV energy is on the main meter, but you sub-meter it, it should be excluded by entering an additional meter with negative entries.
- If your EV energy is on its own meter (not sub-metered), then just leave out that meter altogether to exclude your EV charging energy from your benchmarking.
- If your EV energy is on the main meter and not sub-metered, then you currently have to include this energy when benchmarking. In 2023, we'll be adding an adjustment to estimate your EV energy and subtract it from your building, similar to how parking and swimming pools are handled.
 - Learn more here: [How do I benchmark my EV Charging Station?](#)

Certification

Q5: What are the benefits of receiving ENERGY STAR Certification?

1. **ENERGY STAR certified buildings have lower utility bills**
 - a. Once in operation, ENERGY STAR certified buildings use, on average, 35 percent less energy than similar buildings nationwide. The cost savings can be substantial. For example, ENERGY STAR certified office buildings cost \$0.50 less per square foot to operate than their peers.
2. **ENERGY STAR certified buildings generate 35% fewer greenhouse gas emissions**
 - a. Because they use less energy, ENERGY STAR certified buildings also contribute, on average, 35 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions to our atmosphere. By earning the ENERGY STAR, you're joining the front lines in the fight against climate change.
3. **ENERGY STAR certified buildings are worth more.**
 - a. Energy cost savings lead to higher net operating income. Reliable, persistent energy savings make it more likely that this connection will be recognized with a higher building valuation. Numerous studies demonstrate a sale price premium from 1% - 31% among energy-efficient buildings. [1](#) [2](#)
4. **Federal tenants can only lease space in ENERGY STAR certified buildings**
 - a. If you want to lease your space to a federal tenant, your buildings must be ENERGY STAR certified. (Executive Order 13514 mandates that Federal Agencies may only lease space in ENERGY STAR certified buildings.)
5. **ENERGY STAR certified buildings get better financing terms.**
 - a. Several studies on commercial mortgages find evidence of lower default risk among buildings with labels such as ENERGY STAR. [5](#) As a result, these properties often secure better loan terms (longer interest-only periods) and lower interest rates (typically about 30 - 35 basis points) than similar non-labeled buildings.
6. **Learn more here:** [Top 8 Reasons to Pursue ENERGY STAR Certification | ENERGY STAR](#)

Q6: If I have a multi-use property, how do I know if it is eligible for ENERGY STAR Certification?

Two conditions must apply:

1. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the property's Gross Floor Area (GFA) must be comprised of property types that are eligible for an ENERGY STAR Score
2. More than fifty percent (50%) of the GFA must be comprised of one eligible property type (excluding parking).

Miscellaneous

Q7: What is the difference between site and source energy use intensity (EUI)?

1. Site EUI is the annual amount of all energy your property consumes onsite divided by the property square foot. This included all energy purchased from the grid or in bulk, all renewable energy generated and consumed on-site.
2. Source EUI is the total amount of all the raw fuel required to operate your property, including all losses that occur, divided by the property square foot. Losses include anything that takes place during generation, transmission, and distribution of energy.

[Energy Use Intensity \(EUI\)](#)

Q8: For a campus, how do I enter buildings energy data?

1. Identify [what constitutes as a campus](#). Then, determine which of the following options best fits your property:
 - a. Benchmark the campus ONLY (the "Parent" property), this is a good option if:
 - i. You only have energy data for the campus as a whole
 - ii. You only have partial energy for the child properties (e.g. common areas, or only gas use), but not enough to benchmark them separately.
 - b. Benchmark the campus (the "Parent" property) and SOME child buildings, this is a good option if:
 - i. You have all fuel meters for some of the child buildings; or
 - ii. You have some fuel meters (e.g. only electric) for all child buildings
 - c. Benchmark the campus (the "Parent" property) and ALL child buildings, this is a good option if:
 - i. You have all fuels for all child buildings; or
 - ii. You have some fuels (e.g. only electric) for all child buildings
 - d. Benchmark the individual buildings ONLY, this is a good option if:
 - i. You don't have a need to analyze the data campus-wide.
 - ii. Learn more here: [How do I benchmark a campus?](#)