



Questions and Answers Energy Audits



THE AGENCY
FOR CO-OPERATIVE
HOUSING

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DES COOPÉRATIVES
D'HABITATION

What is an Energy Audit?

An energy audit is the professional service of evaluating the energy efficiency of your buildings. The aim is to suggest ways of using less energy for heating and cooling. The process begins with a review of your co-op's bills for electricity, natural gas and water.

The audit may also check the efficiency, physical condition and programming of thermostats and heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment and other mechanical systems. Sometimes an energy audit is needed to qualify for a government grant.

An energy audit will show you what actions you can take to ensure you are saving energy and money in every way you can. Recommendations will range from simple changes to installing or replacing equipment, and even bigger changes that will really cut your co-op's energy use. But remember that, without action, an energy audit is just data.

How much does an energy audit cost?

The cost of an energy audit is between \$4,000 and \$8,000, plus taxes, depending on the size and complexity of the property.

How long will the actual audit take?

The energy auditor will need access to your building for approximately six to 10 hours over the course of two or three days. The auditor will also talk to staff about building components and would want to look at the building plans.

How long before the audit report is ready?

Analysis of your data and preparation of your report takes about one week. You should receive your energy-audit report within two to three weeks after the inspection. If you don't, start phoning the company!

What information do I need to provide?

You would need to share energy bills for the past few years to see how power is being consumed. Blueprints and other plans are not essential but are recommended because they allow for a more thorough audit.

What size of building can the audit be performed on?

Any size of building can have an energy audit. However, if the building is very large, the audit will take longer and would have to be performed when the energy auditors have a great deal of time available.

Do residents and staff need to vacate the building during the audit process?

No, the audit can be performed with residents and staff on the premises. Their presence is recommended so they can answer questions about energy usage. The auditor will look at a sample of approximately 10 per cent of units.

What parts of the building (e.g., basements, rooftops) would the auditor need to see?

Energy auditors need access to all equipment that consumes power, and particularly to the HVAC system in the mechanical room. They also need roof access to investigate the potential for a photovoltaic system.

Should we get new windows first?

Sometimes replacing windows does not provide the increase in energy savings that you might expect. Other less expensive or higher-impact changes can do more to accomplish this goal. An energy audit will help you determine where on your action list replacing windows should fall.

Are grants available for installing more energy-efficient systems?

From time to time, different levels of government announce programs that offer rebates for retrofitting homes and making them more energy efficient. Some utility companies also offer incentives. As these programs come and go, it is best to do an internet search. You can start by checking the [Agency's website](#).

Our co-op can't afford any of the recommendations. What can we do?

Add the items to your Capital Reserve Plan to spread the cost over several years. If you don't have a plan in place, you might also consider getting a building condition assessment (BCA) and a Capital Reserve or Asset Management Plan. For more information, read our [Q&A on Capital Reserve and Asset Management Plans](#). Your co-op may be eligible for CMHC's [Preservation Funding](#) or another program that will help pay for planning and capital work.

Our co-op is still not sure what to do. Can we get help?

You can. Many of our B.C. clients are members of CHF BC and have benefitted from the federation's Asset Management Program. In other parts of the country, co-ops use CHF Canada's Asset Management Program.



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