



Chris Cayten - Above and beyond Local Law 84: Gearing up for Local Law 87

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By now most N.Y.C. building owners have completed the Energy Benchmarking process and submitted their buildings' scores to the city to comply with Local Law 84. N.Y.C. even extended the deadline for submission from May 1st to August 1st to give building owners more time to complete the process, which can be confusing and time-consuming. For those building owners out there who have not complied yet, there is still time. Go to www.nyc.gov/GGBP to get started.

Most building owners who have completed the benchmarking process have the same two questions: 1. What does this score mean? and 2. How can I raise it before it is made public? Answer #1 - The score is a 1-100 percentile ranking of the building's energy efficiency compared to a nationwide pool of similar buildings and is normalized for weather. Benchmark Scores for non-residential buildings will be posted online in 2012, and residential buildings in 2013.

Answering question #2 is more difficult, but the city has made the decision on where to start easier by requiring owners of buildings over 50,000 s/f to file an Energy Efficiency Report (EER) with the city to comply with Local Law 87. To complete the Energy Efficiency Report, a building owner must complete an ASHRAE Level 2 Energy Audit and Retro-Commissioning (RCx) of the building's base mechanical systems including HVAC, hot water, vertical transportation, lighting and building envelope. The audit and RCx identify potential Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs) that may be implemented by building owners to reduce energy consumption and save money. Local Law 87 requires that the Audit and RCx be performed every 10 years. The filing deadline for each building in N.Y.C. is based on the building's block number, but all buildings are eligible to perform the work now and file the EER in 2013 to take advantage of simpler filing requirements and available NYSERDA funding. Currently, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) is offering a 50% rebate on the cost of ASHRAE Level 2 Energy Audits and Retro-Commissioning. This can mean big savings for building owners who perform work now to be filed in 2013.

Performing energy audits and retro-commissioning and implementing ECMs are the best way to improve a building's Energy Star Score, but scores do not improve overnight. Implemented measures take a few months to increase a building's score, so if you want to improve your building's score before it is published in 2012 and want to take advantage of the current 50% NYSERDA rebate you need to begin the Audit and RCx right away.

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