



## May 1st benchmarking scoring results - The canary in the basement

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May 1st is the benchmarking filing deadline. Be sure to check the scores for your buildings. Low scores signal problems - sometimes costly problems.

Benchmarking scores range from 1-100, with 100 being the best. On a national basis, a benchmarking score of 50 represents the median. However, the median score is 60 or a little better in N.Y.C. because of higher efficiencies.

So where does the canary come into the picture? In the days of low tech mining, miners worked near a canary in a cage. The canary was their safety signal. As long as the canary sang - no problem; if the canary stopped - get out fast.

See benchmarking scores as your high-tech canary. If your scores are in the 60 range, your buildings are average energy users for N.Y.C. If your building comes in with a higher score - even better. With higher benchmarking scores, you could well qualify for Energy Star. Lower scores should raise concerns; very low scores - big concerns. Think of a very low score as your "get out fast" signal. But in the case of benchmarking, it's not "get out fast" - but "fix it fast."

If you find yourself faced with a low score you need to act. Define the problem before you jump into the "fix it fast" mode. You need to know exactly what is causing the low score before you start. But first check out the score itself - make sure it is real. If the low score holds up, then you know there is a problem and then move on to the next step - determining the cause.

The most accurate approach to determining causes behind high levels of energy consumption is an energy audit. Your energy audit will analyze all aspects of energy consumption in your building, including electric, gas, oil and water consumption. Your audit will be your "fix it" guide and will include recommendations covering a series of energy savings measures that you can take. These measures will be supported with cost and payback calculations, so that your "fix it" process can be prioritized in a cost effective manner to maximize results. Don't be surprised if some of the recommendations for corrective measures are relatively low cost or have quick paybacks. If you follow these guidelines - see improved scores and reduced costs.

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