



2012 ENERGY STAR® National Building Competition Frequently Asked Questions

Your Questions about the 2012 National Building Competition...Answered!

Can't find the answer to your question here? Email us at buildings@energystar.gov.

Eligibility Questions:

- 1. Are all types of buildings (e.g., wastewater treatment plants, government buildings, major league baseball stadiums, and/or multifamily housing buildings) eligible to compete?**
Yes, any type of commercial building is eligible to compete as long as you have energy use data for all fuel sources for the entire building for the baseline period (calendar year 2011). The only exception is data centers, which do not measure energy usage by EUI and therefore cannot compete.
- 2. Can I enter my parking garage?**
Yes! To shine a spotlight on the energy savings potential of parking garages and similar facilities, EPA encourages parking garages to enter the 2012 competition. To spur competition, parking garages and similar facilities will compete against each other in their own building category in 2012. While not eligible to be the overall winner of the competition, EPA will highlight the winner of this category.
- 3. What about industrial buildings?**
Industrial buildings are not eligible. Corporate offices of industrial organizations are eligible—as long as they are located in commercial office space.
- 4. Our building competed in last year's Battle of the Buildings. Can we compete again this year?**
Yes, past competitors are welcome!
- 5. Can facilities with "campuses" compete? We have just one meter for all our buildings.**
K-12 schools, hospitals, hotels, senior care facilities, and multifamily housing are the exception when it comes to what constitutes a "building." For these building types, enter all meters from all structures on the campus (master meters and any sub-meters, if applicable) into your Portfolio Manager account. Note that if your building is a college campus, then each building must be individually metered.
- 6. Is building eligibility based on the ENERGY STAR score?**
No. A building does not need to be eligible for a 1-100 ENERGY STAR score to compete—only the energy use intensity (EUI) is needed. This EUI is based on a full year of data, so the nominated building must have complete energy usage data for calendar year 2011 (January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011) entered into Portfolio Manager.
- 7. In 2010 and 2011, participants were required to be ENERGY STAR partners. Can we compete if the building we manage is not a partner?**
Yes. For the 2012 competition, any building that has complete energy usage data entered in Portfolio Manager for the baseline period (calendar year 2011) and submits the data release request by the deadline is eligible to compete. To join ENERGY STAR as a partner, visit www.energystar.gov/join.
- 8. As a service provider, can we nominate client buildings?**
Yes.
- 9. Is there a minimum square footage/occupant/energy load to apply? How are buildings scaled?**
There are no minimum square footage/occupancy/energy load requirements. Buildings will be judged on their percentage-based reduction in EUI.
- 10. Can we enter a leased building (we pay the utilities)?**
Yes, as long as you have energy data for the entire building as a whole.
- 11. Does the building need to be ENERGY STAR certified to be eligible?**
No. This competition is open to all buildings, not just those that have earned EPA's ENERGY STAR.

12. How much does it cost to apply?

There is no cost to apply.

About the Competition

1. What recognition will be given this year?

As in past years, the building with the greatest percentage reduction in weather-normalized energy use intensity (EUI) will be declared the winner. EPA will also highlight the top finisher for each category of buildings, such as K-12, office, retail, parking garage, and others.

New in 2012, EPA will offer recognition to all buildings that achieve a 20% improvement in their weather-normalized energy use intensity, as well as top water savers. Buildings that achieve a 20% improvement and validate their data will receive a personalized PDF certificate from EPA and will be highlighted on the competition website.

2. What kind of publicity will EPA provide?

EPA will chronicle the highlights of the competition through traditional and social media. Competitors are encouraged to help spread the word among their local publications and affiliated media, and EPA will provide press release templates and creative materials for competitors to use.

3. What is the baseline period and improvement period?

The baseline is January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011, and the improvement period (which will be compared against the baseline) is January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012.

4. Why is EPA using January 1, 2011 as an energy data start date?

To accurately calculate a building's energy performance, Portfolio Manager requires at least 12 months of historic energy data. Therefore, we need two 12-month periods to compare against each other to judge the competition. To sustain interest and excitement among competitors, we've compressed the public outreach portion, which is why the competition doesn't officially launch until July 2012.

5. When is the best time to apply for the competition? We are just starting to make energy efficiency improvements. Should we apply now or wait until next year?

We can't guarantee that there will be a competition next year. We encourage you to apply this year and enjoy the learning opportunity the competition offers. An important takeaway from past competitions is that we can't predict how everyone will perform. In past years, some buildings that seemed perfectly poised to make big reductions didn't, and some that we didn't expect to move at all ended up with double-digit percentage-based reductions. The greatest determinant of performance is a strategic, well-executed energy management program.

6. I submitted the data release report according to the step-by-step instructions. Is that all I have to do to register to compete?

Yes! There is no separate application. As long as EPA receives your report before the deadline and none of the required fields are "N/A," your building is in the competition. You'll receive a confirmation email in June with a welcome packet and an invitation to join a Webinar about preparing for competition launch.

Portfolio Manager Questions

1. I have not started a Portfolio Manager account yet. How long does it take to benchmark a building and apply for the competition?

That depends on how organized you are and how complex your building is. You will need to enter your building characteristics and data from your utility bills (all fuel types) dating back to January 1, 2011. If you have this information at your fingertips, it can take as little as an hour or two.

Please keep in mind, however, that data used in Portfolio Manager Reports is updated nightly; therefore, you must wait 24 hours after updating your data or inputting new data before you try to submit your data request report to EPA for the competition for the new facility or data to be included in the report.

2. How do I benchmark my energy and water usage in Portfolio Manager?

There are several useful resources to help you get started. The [Benchmarking Starter Kit](#) contains useful information for collecting the necessary data, registering an account, and inputting your information. You can also attend [Live and Self-guided Training](#) for help with benchmarking. Lastly, learn more about the tool by reading an [Overview of Portfolio Manager](#).

- 3. What if the building does not have consistent occupancy over the competition period?**
That will not matter, since the only metric we will be using is weather-normalized source EUI, which is a measure of energy use/square foot, and does not take into account any other building or operating characteristics. However, given the spirit of the competition, buildings should be fully operational and occupied for the duration of the competition.
- 4. Will there be any verification of the data in Portfolio Manager?**
Yes, but only among the recognition categories—the presumptive overall winner and top finishers in each building category, as well as buildings that achieved 20% savings that would like recognition and top water savers. Each of these will be required to have a licensed professional engineer or registered architect verify their energy and/or water usage data to earn recognition.

Data Release Report Questions

- 1. I would like to enter my entire portfolio in the competition. Is there a way to register a portfolio and submit reports across a portfolio, rather than building by building?**
Yes. Just download and follow the step-by-step instructions from www.energystar.gov/battleofthebuildings. You can easily choose to nominate one, several, or all of the buildings in your portfolio.
- 2. I realized I made a mistake after I submitted my report. Can I resubmit my report?**
Yes, as long as you do so by the May 23 deadline. Remember that data used in Portfolio Manager Reports is updated nightly; therefore, you must wait 24 hours after updating your data or inputting new data before you try to re-submit your data request report to EPA for the competition for the new facility or data to be included in the report.

The resubmitted report will update the previously submitted information with the new data you provide. For example, if you nominate 10 buildings, then correct a data entry mistake for one of them, you can resubmit the corrected building and only that single building will be replaced. The other nine will remain in the system unchanged.
- 3. The instructions say I must provide energy use data for the calendar year (January 1, 2011- December 31, 2011), but my utility bills do not correspond exactly with the days of the month. For example, my first bill for the year includes my building's energy use for the first half of January and the second half of December of 2010. How should I enter this information?**
In this case, you may need to enter your building's energy use data for 13 months instead of 12. In this example, to complete your data request report for 2011, you will need to enter the data from your first bill (which contained information from December 2010) as well as the following 12 bills, for a total of 13 bills. Enter the start and end dates as they appear on the 13 bills. Portfolio Manager will use the full calendar year (12 months) data and will time-weight any entries that fall partially into the 12-month period of the calendar year.
- 4. I entered my building's information into Portfolio Manager, but it doesn't appear in the data request report.**
If you entered your building's information correctly into your Portfolio Manager account, it typically takes 24 hours before you can view the information in your account or pull it into the data release report.

Benchmarking and Improving Water Questions

- 1. We don't track our outdoor water use in Portfolio Manager. Does this mean we can't participate in the water category of the competition?**
You can still participate in the competition. Buildings will report their overall water use that they enter into Portfolio Manager – which could be indoor only, outdoor only, or indoor/outdoor. The metric for the competition will be based on the percent that is reduced over the period of performance.
- 2. What measures can I take to reduce my building's water use?**
Please take a look at the following resources, which provide a variety of best management practices and tips for reducing commercial or institutional building water use:
 - Arizona Municipal Water Users Association and Black and Veatch, 2008. *Facility Manager's Guide to Water Management*. www.amwua.org/pdfs/facility_managers_guide.pdf.

- East Bay Municipal Utility District, 2008. *WaterSmart Guidebook: A Water-Use Efficiency Plan Review Guide for New Businesses*: www.ebmud.com/for-customers/conservation-rebates-and-services/commercial/watersmart-guidebook.
- North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 2009. *Water Efficiency Manual for Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Facilities*: www.p2pays.org/ref/01/00692.pdf.
- U.S. Department of Energy's Federal Energy Management Program. Federal Water Efficiency Best Management Practices: http://www1.eere.energy.gov/femp/program/waterefficiency_bmp.html.
- U.S. EPA's WaterSense® Program: <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/commercial/index.html>.