



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT LAUNCHES CHICAGO ENERGY RATING SYSTEM

Chicago becomes the first city in the nation with a large building energy rating system

Today, Chicago became the first US city with a large building energy rating requirement with the formal launch of the Chicago Energy Rating System. The ordinance, adopted in 2017, will rate building energy efficiency performance on a zero to four-star scale, based on the four stars of the Chicago flag. Buildings will be issued a Chicago Energy Rating Placard and required to display the placard in a prominent location within their property and share this rating when listing the property for sale or lease.

“Through the Chicago Energy Rating System, the city is placing environmental prosperity and climate health at the forefront of how business is done every day,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “We must protect our environment and support the growth of local, clean jobs by promoting energy efficiency at all levels.”

Earlier this year, the City of Chicago set a goal of transitioning to 100 percent renewable energy in buildings across the city by 2035. The Chicago Energy Rating System and other policies that improve energy efficiency are key strategies that will enable the city to begin moving towards its 100 percent renewable energy goal. Buildings that are more efficient use less energy to operate, making renewable energy more feasible.

“Energy labeling is known to improve energy efficiency by making the energy performance of a building easier to see and understand,” said Brian Imus, Executive Director of the Illinois Green Alliance. “We are thrilled to see that Chicago is leading the way for the United States by being the first city to adopt an energy rating system for large buildings.”

Announced in 2017, this rating system uses the existing and publicly available energy data to rate buildings over 50,000 square feet, which includes approximately 3,400 properties across every neighborhood in Chicago. Large buildings are one of the most significant contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in Chicago and the



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nation. The new rating system expands the city's existing Energy Benchmarking Ordinance, which requires buildings over 50,000 square feet to gather annual energy use information and report the data once per year.

The new Rating System is designed to increase awareness of energy performance through information and transparency. Buildings are not required to make changes or improvements to boost energy efficiency; however, properties that voluntarily improve their energy performance can earn an additional star in their rating. Buildings that do not comply with reporting mandates (which have been in effect since 2014) will receive zero out of four stars. In addition to posting the star rating publicly on-site and providing it at the time of sale or lease, the city will list the ratings on the Chicago Data Portal after an initial six month grace period. More information on the energy benchmarking ordinance can be found by visiting www.CityofChicago.org/EnergyBenchmarking and information about the new rating system is online at www.ChicagoEnergyRating.org

For the last two years, Chicago was ranked number one in the nation for energy-efficient office buildings. The 2017 and 2018 National Green Building Adoption Index published by CBRE Group Inc. and Maastricht University ranks 30 of the largest real estate markets in the country. Between 2017 and 2018, Chicago increased its square footage of green office space nearly four percent to 69.78%.

The Chicago Energy Rating Placards will be issued every year after the June 1st energy benchmarking deadline. The City will begin mailing the first batch of 2019 Energy Rating Placards to property representatives this week, with the remaining Placards to be finalized and mailed by mid- September. In this first year only, property owners will have a six month grace period to post their Placards. In future years, the Placards must be posted as soon as they are received in the mail.

Although some temporary exemptions are available for new construction, low occupancy, new ownership, or financial distress, nearly all other buildings over 50,000 square feet in area are required to comply, regardless of the age of the property. In fact, energy benchmarking data reported by over 3,000 properties over the past six years show that older properties tend to perform just as well or better than newer ones.

The City's Energy Benchmarking Help Center is available on weekdays from 9 am to 5 pm to answer any questions (except major holidays). The Help Center can be reached by phone at (855) 858-6878 or by email to: Info@ChicagoEnergyBenchmarking.org.

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