

## **Five steps to improve your Energy Performance Certificate rating**

The government has announced that it's extending the Home Information Pack Scheme. From 10 September all 3 bedroom homes and above will now require an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) as part of their Home Information Pack. But don't worry if you don't get an A rating, says g-lec, the company responsible for training Domestic Energy Assessors, only a handful of homes in the UK will have one. Even to get a B rating, they say, your house will probably need to have been built to the latest regulations!

Most homes, they predict, will achieve a C to F rating, with the average, especially for older homes, being a D or E. But if you're worried about getting a bad rating, g-lec advise taking five simple, cost effective steps that could raise your rating, lower your bills and improve your house sale.

- 1 Loft insulation – 250mm is the recommended thickness
- 2 Cavity Wall insulation on exterior walls where appropriate. Most houses built between 1930 and early 1980s have a cavity between brick and breeze block but the cavities are not necessarily filled.
- 3 Thermostatic radiator valves – have these fitted on your central heating radiators. When you're in a room the ideal temperature is 21 degrees, and when unoccupied 18 degrees.
- 4 Hot water tank – make sure it's well lagged with a jacket (these cost from £10) and with a thermostat set to between 55 to 60 degrees.
- 5 Low energy light bulbs – even though these are not actually fixtures and fittings – they are included in your survey and now very cheap.

Of these, loft insulation and cavity wall insulation are the two most important steps, say g-lec, and carry proportionately the most weight in your EPC. Many bodies such as the government, local councils and utility companies may offer grants towards the installation of such measures. A new system to help homebuyers get green grants worth hundreds of pounds to lower their fuel bills

and make their homes greener, linked to the introduction of EPCs has just been announced by the government..

The EPC will distinguish between measures that will cost under £500 such as those above and those that are more expensive such as doubling glazing or a new condensing boiler. Also listed will be any further measures that will help achieve the highest possible ratings for the home, but which could be expensive, taking at least seven years and maybe up to as much as 75 years to repay their cost in energy savings.

“But take our five simple steps”, says John Davidson, managing director of g-lec , part of the gas-elec group “and your rating may rise a grade. More importantly it will look more energy efficient and help smooth and improve your house sale”.

The g-lec Skills Academy is part of the gas-elec group, the gas and electrical safety inspection organisation, whose award-winning training centre in West London has been training safety inspectors for the past 15 years. An approved centre for training Domestic Energy Assessors, their comprehensive DEA course, for the necessary DipDEA qualification, encompasses five days in the classroom, as well as practical sessions in the form of simulated Assessments out in the marketplace, DVD-based distance learning, plus five assessments and a final examination.

For further information visit [www.gas-elec.co.uk](http://www.gas-elec.co.uk) or ring 0845 868 6051

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*Editor's notes:*

*g-lec is part of the gas-elec organisation, who since 1996 have been offering a unique service of joint gas and electrical safety inspections in just one visit. With 120 engineers this year carrying out over 120,000 inspections in domestic households throughout the UK, gas-elec provides impartial inspections without*

*any vested interest (e.g. selling boilers) although the company does carry out remedial works on request.*

*4 bedroomed homes put on the market since 1 August have needed an HIP and an EPC carried out by an accredited Domestic Energy Assessor (DEA). 3 bedroomed homes will come within the legislation on 10 September. As more DEA's become accredited, smaller homes will be brought within the legislation and, from April 2008, EPCs will begin to be required in the massive rented sector.*

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