

## Overview

Washington, DC office buildings subject to Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) Cycle 1 that need to take action to meet Cycle 1 standards are advised to review and ensure that the space characteristics in your ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager entry for your building accurately reflects current conditions. Space conditions have a notable impact on your ENERGY STAR rating and the Performance Pathway evaluation metric of Site EUI Adjusted to Current Year.

Updating your Portfolio Manager entries to ensure accurate space data as your tenants implement **Return to Office (RTO)** policies is critical. Below are some key considerations and actions to take to ensure that your Portfolio Manager data is correct, maintaining a straightforward pathway for Cycle 1 compliance. Ensuring these items are correct in other jurisdictions is also important, but bears less direct impact on how properties might meet Maryland BEPS.

Here are some key next steps to take to ensure your Portfolio Manager data is up to date:

### 1. Engage with your tenants, including federal agencies.

- Collaborate with your tenants to gather accurate occupancy forecasts.
- Ensure **after-hours energy use policies** such as overtime HVAC use are clearly communicated.
- Check **lease requirements** with tenants engaging in RTO to ensure that your spaces are up to date and meeting lease requirements.

### 2. Update Occupancy Data in ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager. This includes items such as:

- Ensure occupancy rates, including workers and computers reflect actual building use post-RTO. This may require staff to conduct occupied space walkthroughs to confirm new occupancy patterns. If so, the results should be documented to aid with any future data verification efforts.
- Update weekly operating hours, both in Portfolio Manager and if necessary in your HVAC Building Management System (BMS) to align with new staffing patterns.
- Adjust Portfolio Manager and your BMS for vacant spaces or hybrid schedules that impact energy usage metrics.

### 3. Update Reporting & Compliance Documentation

- Verify that your ENERGY STAR scores are based on accurate occupancy metrics once updates have been applied.
- Ensure benchmarking submissions align with the most recent benchmarking guidelines in your building's jurisdiction.

- If key operating conditions were updated, keep the documentation substantiating those changes on file for potential audits or compliance reviews.
- Provide transparency for interested stakeholders around sustainability efforts and compliance goals.

Adding occupancy will also change how your building operates on a day-to-day basis. Below are some steps you can consider taking or adjusting:

#### **4. Optimize HVAC and Building systems**

- Adjust BMS setpoints and schedules based on actual occupancy. Frequently, BMS schedules can shift or change due to one-off events; if this happens, instituting a regular BMS schedule review can help catch excess HVAC runtime regularly.
- Compare current usage with historical data to identify discrepancies.
- Evaluate plug loads and HVAC demand to ensure they align with new operating conditions. Excess plug load runtime can be discussed with tenants and excess HVAC demand is a sign that additional investigation may be required.
- Adjust energy models and expectations if demand patterns shift due to increased or fluctuating occupancy.
- Assess whether alternative compliance pathways are necessary as a result of these changes.

#### **5. Use Your BMS to evaluate Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)**

- Use occupancy sensors to validate building utilization patterns.
- Ensure demand-controlled ventilation (DCV), if installed, is functioning correctly. If it is functioning correctly, then monitor carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) levels and adjust ventilation rates accordingly.
- Confirm compliance with ASHRAE and EPA guidelines for air exchange rates. Reducing ventilation rates below what code allows is not permitted as a method of compliance with any BEPS, nor is it recommended for indoor air quality.

#### **6. Consider Future BEPS Adjustments**

- Anticipate further policy changes that may impact how the BEPS your building is in operates. AOBA is tracking potential adjustments and if there are questions, please contact us.
- Explore efficiency upgrades (e.g., lighting retrofits, smart building tech) that align with not only current BEPS, but future BEPS.
- Ensure building data supports compliance with BEPS reporting requirements and helps you get ahead of potential changes.

Thanks to Sustainability Committee member Ryan Easton of Carr Properties for helping develop this document. Members interested in joining the Sustainability Committee can email Chris Pendley at [cpendley@aoba-metro.org](mailto:cpendley@aoba-metro.org).