



Sterling Accreditation Limited
Setting the Standard

Operational Procedures for Members

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1.0 Introduction

Operational procedures are provided to Energy Assessors, accredited by Sterling Accreditation Limited, who undertake energy assessments that result in the production of an EPC, DEC or ACIR Energy Assessment.

This document is complementary to the supplementary policies and should be read in conjunction with the relevant assessment procedures that are available to download from the Sterling Accreditation Scheme website.

This procedural document is mandatory for all Energy Assessors operating within the Sterling Accreditation Scheme. Failure to adopt and implement the requirements of these procedures may result in further investigation and ultimately expulsion from the Accreditation Scheme.

However, Sterling Accreditation Limited recognises that this policy document may not cover all eventualities and that there may be circumstances related to an individual energy assessment that are exceptional. In this event the Energy Assessor should record details of the anomaly and if appropriate contact the Scheme Manager.



2.0 General Management Systems

The Energy Assessor, whilst undertaking energy assessments under the Sterling Accreditation Scheme should acknowledge the following procedures in order to support their assessment work.

These include:

- The terms and conditions of business should specifically cover the provision of an EPC, DEC or an ACIR Energy assessment.
- A customer ordering and booking process that specifically covers the provision of an EPC, DEC or ACIR Energy assessment.
- All information supporting the production of an EPC, DEC or an ACIR Energy report should be retained for a minimum of 15 years, including, but not restricted to; electronic software files (used to produce the energy certificate and reports), site notes, photos, drawings, sketches and specific notes/instructions about the site.
- Accurate record keeping that allows all assessments to be individually identified with the appropriate Certificate Reference Number (CRN) and/or Report Reference Number (RRN), with information including (but not necessarily restricted to) the assessment date, site address and the client details.
- A complaints procedure that aligns with the Sterling Accreditation Complaints procedure.



3.0 Pre-Assessment Information

An Energy Assessor may work for a variety of different business types including, but not restricted to, a sole trader, large surveying practice, panel of assessors or larger consulting firms. Whilst each assessment may demand a different approach to the client the following factors should be adequately addressed prior to undertaking the assessment.

Each Energy Assessor ensures that the client, or the client's representative, is made aware of the following:

- The processes involved in producing an energy assessment
- For an onsite assessment, information on; likely time required on site, access requirements, measurements required, etc
- What an EPC, DEC and an Air Conditioning Energy assessment is, the kind of information it will contain and how it should be used or displayed
- That all energy assessment details are placed on a national central register that can be accessed with the correct RRN or CRN
- The energy assessment is limited to energy and environmental performance and is measured against a set of National Standards
- The Energy Assessor has a written complaints procedure in place and that the Energy Assessor operates within an accredited scheme run by Sterling Accreditation Limited
- The Energy Assessor is registered for the correct level of assessment and has the specific accreditation, training and experience to undertake the level of assessment required.
- The Energy Assessor is trained and experienced for the specific mode of operation, i.e., ORCalc, SBEM and DSM assessments do not use the same methodology as different training and accreditation tools are required
- Whilst undertaking onsite assessments in schools, children's homes, hospitals, colleges, universities and other education establishments, the Energy Assessor will not undertake the survey if a Minor (under the age of 16 years) is solely present. A survey will only be carried out if a responsible adult is present or if the Energy Assessor is escorted by an appropriate person and/or a member of staff
- Energy Assessors require access to all areas of the building which is subject to the energy assessment and then determine the zones required during the assessment, including any unconditioned zones.



Under the terms of the Sterling Accreditation Scheme Rules, Energy Assessors should provide the client, or the client's representative, with a copy of the Energy Assessor's terms of business and modus operandi. These include some or all of the following:

- Clear pricing policy
- Estimated timescale between receiving the order for the assessment and the site visit
- Estimated timescale between the site visit, or the office based assessment, to the actual production of the energy assessment and report
- Determining a complete list of what is required from the client by the Energy Assessor prior to the site audit. Request details of all potential site specific hazards that are prevalent and undertake the appropriate risk assessment prior to the visit
- Obtaining the correct address and post code for the building and verify this via the CLG Address Service to obtain the correct UPRN from the appropriate database for England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- For Air Conditioning Assessments the RRN has to be obtained from Sterling Accreditation Limited as this is not part of the CLG offering at this time
- Agreeing a site visit date (if applicable), the contact details of the person who will carry out the energy assessment and the person who will be in the building (if site visit required)
- Arranging for the client or their representative to be present at the inspection (if applicable) or any other specialist such as maintenance contractors for air conditioning audits, security personnel for unoccupied buildings and knowledgeable escorts for buildings which are extremely large or complex
- The Energy Assessor should only produce a report within the extent of their remit, level of competency and appropriate accreditation scheme procedures and rules and decline any instructions outside their level of competency and record this
- Ensure that the Energy Assessors work complies with Sterling Accreditation's Code of Conduct and follows the Complaints Procedures set out.



4.0 Undertaking the Assessment

4.1 Site Based Assessment

The Energy Assessor should:

- Make a prearranged appointment at the building to be inspected and have a contact name of a responsible person on site to report to. On arrival sign in and provide photo identification clearly showing you are the registered Energy Assessor booked for the energy assessment
- Establish that there are no potential site specific hazards that are evident since any pre site visit risk assessment was carried out
- Undertake, if necessary, an initial reconnaissance so that a Health and Safety evaluation is completed. This also identifies the various parts of the property that are not included within the assessment with adequate references to rooms or elevations
- Reaffirm the process of undertaking the energy assessment, in particular if those actions may be considered intrusive in an existing, occupied or operational building. Specific areas may have to be audited at a specific time to avoid disturbance (like court rooms, treatment rooms, lecture halls, interview rooms, banks, sport centres and other restricted areas).

Prior to undertaking the assessment an Energy Assessor should:

- Verify with the client or their representative if there are any building elements that are likely to be damaged as a consequence of the survey; the audits are normally non-intrusive and should not involve removing panels or covers
- Verify with the client that all the areas of the building are fully accessible in order to successfully complete the assessment
- Research the history of the property with the client or their representative in reference to any energy related work for example:
 1. Plant rooms
 2. Roof top plant location
 3. External energy plant and its location
 4. District heating or cooling systems and source
 5. Combined Heat and Power systems
 6. Building Energy Management Systems (BEMS)
 7. Type of construction
 8. Cavity wall insulation installation
 9. Double glazing installation date
 10. Solar panel installation
 11. Ground Source Heat pump
 12. Boiler upgrade date, etc.

Identify and record all restrictions that restrict a full data set being collated.

- Determine if entry to all areas and zones is required, for example, loft spaces or whether a reasonable assessment can be made from limited access.



The Energy Assessor should:

- Not undertake any action that they believe will present a risk to their personal health and safety, or to others;
 - Terminate the assessment immediately if loose fill asbestos is identified. Inform the client or their representative the reason why the assessment has been terminated and recommend that the asbestos is removed by an accredited body
 - In the event of an accident the Energy Assessor should consider terminating and/or postponing the inspection, dependent on the severity
 - Terminate or postpone the assessment if the client or their representative attempts to intimidate or abuse you in any way
 - Enter any restricted areas which require a **permit to work**
 - Take due care to note that the assessment is a visual inspection only; it is not a destructive or invasive process.

- Not undertake any action that may cause undue damage (to furniture etc.) or which could be unsafe, for example:
 - Do not climb on walls
 - Do not climb on office partitioning
 - Do not stand on office furniture
 - Do not stand on water pipes (or any other)
 - Do not walk around unsupported loft spaces
 - Avoid walking on external roofs except where walk ways have been provided and have guard rails
 - Inspect any plant where inspection hatches or chambers or ducts are located and which require the plant to be shut down or isolated by a trained appropriate operative
 - Remove ceiling tiles.

- Only use the correct access points that are presently available for example:
 - Use fitted loft ladders and only if they are safe to do so
 - Only use scaffolding (that is already present) if it is correctly tagged fit for use
 - Do not enter buildings or rooms where the integrity of you or your client could be compromised or endangered.

- Not touch or disturb:
 - Any part of the electrical installations
 - Glass fibre insulation.



4.2 Design / Office Based Assessment for Newly Constructed Buildings

For all the non-site gathered assessment work, for example all newly constructed buildings; the following list describes the methodology criteria to complete the assessment.

- The design brief provided to the Energy Assessor should be gathered in full prior to undertaking the assessment. A pre-assessment report may be undertaken initially in order to assess the likely outcome
- The design specification in respect of the heating, cooling, and all other mechanical and electrical details along with all designed envelope elements should be gathered in full and recorded using the Sterling Accreditation standard assessment forms
- Detailed layout drawings including plans, elevations and applicable sections should be saved within the specific job file, including those that have been used to build either:
 1. The Dynamic Simulation model
 2. The SBEM assessment model
 3. The Air Conditioning Energy Assessment Report
 4. Carbon Reduction Commitment assessment
 5. Heat loss assessment
 6. Renewable energy and sustainability target
- Heat loss perimeter elements should be calculated and indicated within the job file such as walls, floor, roof etc. for all EPC type work
- Each area and zone of the building or dwelling included should be identified such as extension(s), non-separated conservatory, basement and room in the roof (if there is one), plant rooms, sheltered non heated space(s) such as apartment corridors, garages or escape staircase
- The calculations for the floor area(s) for non-dwellings and dwellings as well as total heat loss perimeter for each storey should be recorded.

Further information:

If further information is recorded, beyond the usual Sterling Accreditation Site Data form, it shall be detailed, legible and accurate. It is expected that there will be some free text to support the above design and specification details.

Please note that the specific site notes should be recorded on the Sterling Site Data form (available from the Sterling Accreditation website) with the relevant Report Reference No (RRN) and the Energy Assessors Profile Reference Number (PRN).



5.0 Guidance Information

In the event that the software assessment tool provides an inappropriate recommendation, in regards of improvement measures, the Energy Assessor must interpret the recommendations and remove those that are inappropriate and add in those they deem appropriate. The Energy Assessor should also utilise the section for their own recommendations based on their inspection and knowledge of what would be the most cost effective actions.

For example:

- A recommendation for solar water heating when there is no central hot water storage and a very low demand for hot water, should be removed
- A recommendation for a high efficiency boiler should be removed if there was a recommendation for a condensing boiler, which was actually more practical
- A recommendation to fill the cavities of a house in an extremely exposed location or if the property has poor pointing then the recommendation should be removed
- Similarly a recommendation to increase loft insulation, should be disregarded if signs of either mould or condensation are evident in the loft space (unless the loft space can be adequately ventilated)
- A recommendation for double glazing may be rejected if the property is within a conservation area.

In order to do this, the Energy Assessor must understand the underpinning principles behind the selection criteria of Improvement Measures and be aware of potential impact to other building elements. The Energy Assessor must be capable of understanding which recommendations are inappropriate and how to remove them. The Energy Assessor must also be able to provide clarification to the client for both the Energy Rating and his recommendations.

The Energy Assessor should note that on site:

- The assessment must be conducted from the property itself and adjoining public space only. An Energy Assessor must refuse any suggestion to trespass on neighbouring properties without full permission
- An Energy Assessor may be privy to personal information whilst undertaking an assessment; this information bears no relationship to the production of the EPC and must be treated with the appropriate level of discretion at all times
- Any evidence of impropriety, vandalism, evidence of apparently unauthorised occupation and other irregularities found on site should be reported to the appropriate authorities and the client and recorded on notes
- The Energy Assessor should be aware of their 'Common Law' duty to report criminal activities
- If valuables (e.g. jewellery, money, car keys, and mobile phones) are openly visible, the Energy Assessor should ensure that they have a witness available during the surveying of those rooms, i.e. the client or their representative should be present
- Generally during the course of operating as an Energy Assessor, information pertaining to clients may become evident that may be classified as 'Personal Data' under the Data Protection Act 1998. Some of this information may be held on



computer, and an Energy Assessor should consequently ensure that the relevant provisions are put in place to ensure Data Protection Act 1998 is understood and implemented

- With regard to photographic records used during the energy audit the Energy Assessor should avoid taking any photos which would include people, avoid staff or customers, students or pupils, or members of the public in the building energy assessment site audit
- Where photo records are taken these should include a photo of the front of the building clearly identifying the site location. Also, include a label of the building name or site board or name board, street location evidence (street sign) and then as much evidence of the building audit as appropriate for the complexity of the building and the level of audit being undertaken
- For future Quality Assurance assessments by Sterling Accreditation Limited or a third party, it will be in the Energy Assessor's best interests to be able to clearly demonstrate what was surveyed (by site notes, plans, etc), what was seen (photographic proof) and how the assessment led to the Report produced. This may also be vital in any challenge to the results of the energy assessment for this building.



6.0 CLG Revised Requirements for Commercial EPCs in force from 1st June 2010

The Energy Assessor should note that changes have come into effect through the CLG Commercial conventions, issued 1st June 2010, and abide by these changes when undertaking a Commercial EPC. These changes are shown separately on the Sterling Accreditation website. In particular, the following two changes should be noted:

- The clarification of assessing the correct EPC Level for a building, as per the flowchart below
- The use of default values:

“The Energy Assessor shall only use the default values within the Software Tool in the absence of any conventions identified within this (the conventions) document or more specific information on the building

Where a default value is selected the Energy Assessor must provide evidence detailing why the default value has been selected to enable their Accreditation Scheme to verify appropriate use of default values during Quality Assurance processes. Use of default values should be avoided where possible.”

