



Energize Your Business

An Introduction to Commercial Energy Efficiency

Why is energy efficiency important for business owners?

For businesses, energy efficiency is an important part of their sustainability journey. It's all about finding smart ways to use less energy while still getting the job done. This might mean swapping out old, inefficient equipment, setting up systems to conserve energy use, or even tapping into renewable energy sources. These approaches not only save money, but also reduce our environmental footprint and allow us to be good stewards of the planet. When businesses make energy efficiency a priority, they're not only boosting their bottom line but also have the potential to:

- ✓ **Improve indoor air quality and health of staff by reducing or eliminating pollutants from on-site fossil fuel combustion;**
- ✓ **Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigating climate change;**
- ✓ **Support other local businesses that perform efficiency work!**

Taking the first step: Performing an energy audit

Performing an energy audit is an important first step in pinpointing the best energy efficiency measures for your business. It can provide valuable insights into energy usage, help to prioritize efficiency investments, and maximize energy savings. The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning ([ASHRAE](#)) has established standardized levels of energy auditing to guide businesses in assessing and improving their energy performance. These levels are commonly referred to as **ASHRAE Level 1, 2, and 3** and differ based on the audit's intensiveness and what type of outcome to expect. Businesses can learn more about energy audit levels by using this [Guide to Level 1, 2, & 3 Energy Audits](#)

The [U.S. Department of Energy](#) recognizes energy auditor certifications from ASHRAE's [Building Energy Assessment Professional \(BEAP\)](#) and [AEE's Certified Energy Auditor \(CEA\)](#) programs. To find a certified energy auditor to service your business, search [BEAP](#) or [CEA](#) in your area or review this [list of commercial energy auditors](#) serving the region. Some utilities also provide free audits and incentives for adopting efficiency measures. Check with your utility for services and incentives available to commercial customers in your service area.

Energy Efficiency Measures for Businesses

Employee Engagement

Encourage staff to adopt energy-saving habits, such as turning off lights and equipment when not in use.

LED Lighting

Replace traditional bulbs with energy-efficient LED lighting to improve energy consumption and save on energy bills.

Smart Thermostats

Install smart thermostats to regulate temperature more efficiently and reduce energy use during off-peak hours.

Energy-Efficient Appliances

Upgrade to Energy Star certified kitchen appliances or office equipment designed to consume less energy.

Building Envelope Fixes

Upgrade or repair leaks in insulation, windows, doors, or roofing to improve energy performance and reduce losses.

HVAC Improvements

Invest in efficient HVAC systems, including installation of electric heat pumps or improving ductwork.

Integrating Renewables

Install renewable energy systems like solar to generate onsite electricity and reduce reliance on energy grid power.



Energize Your Business

An Introduction to Commercial Energy Efficiency

Incentives and financing for energy efficiency improvements

Local and state governments, as well as utilities, have incentives to help small businesses pay for energy efficiency upgrades. The [Inflation Reduction Act](#) also offers significant federal tax deductions for businesses that improve their energy use. [The Energy Efficiency Alliance](#) has curated a comprehensive collection of resources aimed at assisting both businesses and individuals in identifying and taking advantage of available energy efficiency incentives:

- [Pennsylvania energy efficiency programs](#)
- [New Jersey energy efficiency programs](#)
- [Federal energy efficiency programs](#)

If your business operates in Delaware, you can find information on local incentives, financing, and support services through [Energize Delaware's resources for businesses](#).

Understanding limitations and challenges

For businesses who lease their property, there are limitations and challenges to consider when exploring energy efficiency measures. Business tenants often have limited control over building systems and infrastructure and lease agreements may restrict tenants' ability to make certain upgrades. Despite these challenges, there are strategies that businesses can employ to overcome limitations when leasing a property:

- **Collaboration:** Landlords and tenants can work together to identify mutually beneficial energy efficiency opportunities and negotiate lease terms that incentivize investments in energy-saving measures.
- **Education and Advocacy:** Businesses can educate landlords about the potential benefits of energy efficiency upgrades, such as improved property value, tenant satisfaction, and reduced operating expenses. They can also advocate for policies and programs that support energy efficiency in leased commercial spaces.
- **Flexible Lease Agreements:** Businesses can negotiate lease agreements that allow for energy efficiency upgrades, specify responsibilities for maintenance and improvements, and address the allocation of costs and benefits associated with energy-saving measures.

Organizations That Can Help

Energy Efficiency Alliance

Is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing energy efficiency in the Mid-Atlantic. ➤ [Visit their website](#)

PECO Ways to Save

Offers energy efficiency tools and incentives to help businesses reduce energy use. ➤ [Visit their website](#)

Philadelphia Energy Authority

Administers Philadelphia's C-PACE financing and connects businesses to energy programs. ➤ [Visit their website](#)

Additional Resources

- [ENERGY STAR for small business](#)
- [Energy Audits for Small Businesses](#)
- [What is the Difference Between ASHRAE Level 1, 2, and 3 Audits](#)