

Five Ways to Improve Your Multifamily Building Grade During COVID-19

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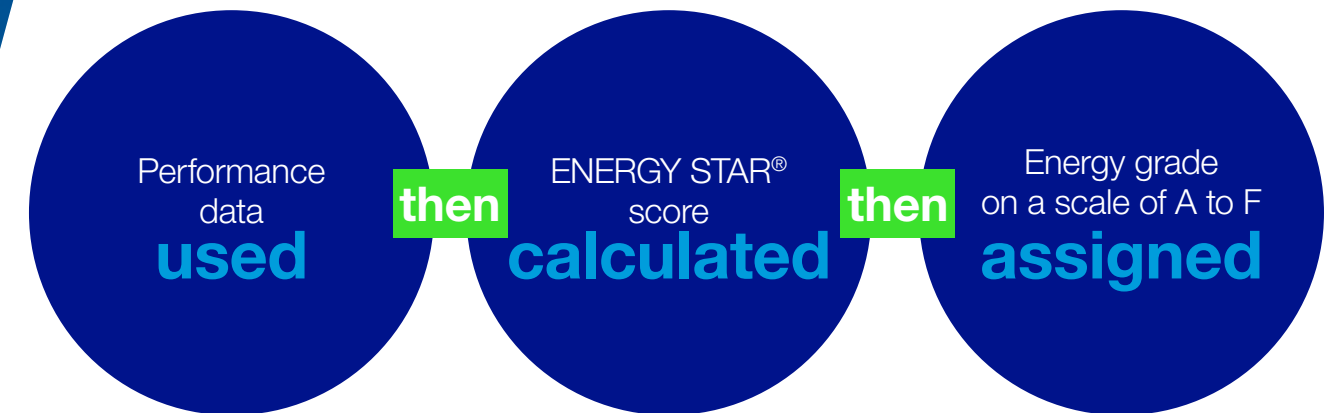
For more information on incentive opportunities to help increase building grades, visit ngrid.com/NYC_benchmarklaw or call **877-316-9491**.



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The coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to impact the U.S. economy, and multifamily property owners are among the many who have been both financially and operationally impacted by the pandemic. In addition to the new regulations recently introduced to help protect tenants throughout these times, property owners are also navigating new laws to promote energy efficiency within buildings.

The recently introduced Local Law 33, a key part of New York City's ambitious Climate Mobilization Act, assigns a building grade to properties in New York City with 25,000 sq. ft. or more based on their energy usage.



**Nearly
2/3**

of New York City's greenhouse gas emissions come from energy usage in buildings, and until the recent passage of Local Law 33 (as amended by Local Law 95), the city hasn't shared the energy-efficiency performance of buildings.

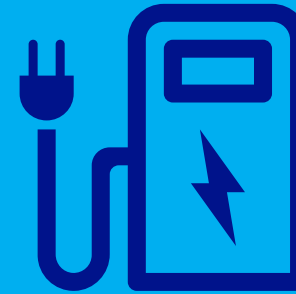
As of October 1, 2020,
it became mandatory that

energy grades be
displayed
within
30 days
of receiving the designation
in a place that must be
clearly visible to tenants
and visitors.

A lower building grade makes it known to the public that a business is not energy efficient and may therefore deter tenants and consumers who value the environment. Additionally, tenants may be less likely to rent spaces from buildings with low grades, as they imply higher utility bills.

The impact of COVID-19 cannot be overstated.

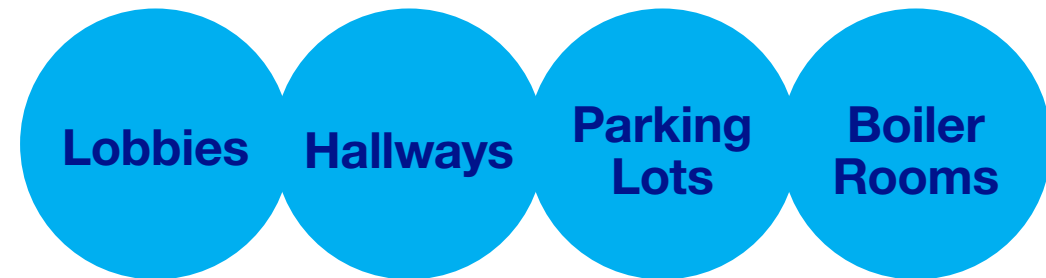
Tenants are now home more frequently and are using more energy than ever before.



Property owners also face the challenge of being unable to add energy-efficiency upgrades in individual units because many tenants may be uncomfortable welcoming strangers into their homes to do the work.

This means that owners and property managers will need to think creatively in order to take the steps needed to increase their building's grade during the pandemic.

Ideal places to start—common areas. Here are four places multifamily building owners and property managers can work to increase their building grade during the COVID-19 pandemic.



1 Insulation

While property managers may already know that insulation is a big deal and would save significant money, it often gets overlooked. A proper system includes insulation for pipes, valves, boilers, steam drums and outside duct work.



Hotter surfaces without insulation
can result in

up to 20x

more heat loss than those with insulation.

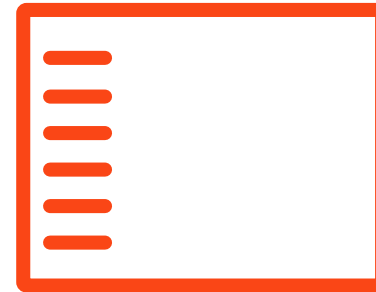
In multifamily properties, poor insulation can quickly add up on the energy bill.



An energy audit can help to identify any areas where insulation is weak or lacking. Additionally, it generally only takes one year to pay back the initial investment of a properly installed insulation system after the work is completed.

2 Space Heat

Vacancies are unfortunately a reality at many multifamily properties. For units that are unoccupied, are the air conditioning and space heating turned off? Is there unneeded electricity usage in the space? In unused apartments, it is a good idea to tie exhaust fans to light switches and reduce ventilation.



3

Upgrade lighting in common areas.

Lighting and the lack of lighting controls could be a cause of significant energy waste, especially in a multifamily property where lighting in common areas may be left on 24/7. There may be an opportunity to upgrade lighting in areas such as the lobby, laundry facilities, hallways and more.



Upgrading traditional lighting to LED bulbs or compact fluorescent lamps can have a greater effect on a property owner's bottom line, while saving energy and helping to increase their building grade.

Additionally, LED bulbs can last up to

10x longer than conventional lighting,

meaning fewer bulbs to purchase and less money paid to maintenance workers to replace them.

Being the “city that never sleeps,” people may enter or leave the property at any hour, so proper lighting is necessary.

Upgrading to LED fixtures can also help to provide better and clearer lighting in common areas to help tenants, maintenance workers and visitors feel more comfortable at any time of the day.

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4

Opt for occupancy sensors.

In addition to swapping traditional bulbs for LEDs, building owners can look at installing occupancy sensors in the common areas of the facility as a way to reduce energy waste and save on utility costs. In areas such as fitness centers and laundry rooms where the lights don't need to constantly be on, an occupancy sensor can detect when there is no longer a person in the room and automatically turn the lights off to save energy.

These sensors work best in spaces that are occupied intermittently, rather than consistently, meaning a space where there is usually traffic for more than a couple hours a day and where the lights would remain on if the building is occupied.

There are a variety of occupancy sensors, many of which automatically turn the lights on when a space is occupied, increasing security for tenants. Other sensors can be controlled by time, a feature that can be helpful in spaces that may close at a specific time.



5

Re-evaluate thermostats in lobbies.

New York City is known for its cold winters, with temperatures reaching near zero on the chilliest of days. Tenants continually entering and exiting the building can cause inconsistent temperatures, making the heater work harder than it has to in order to warm up the common area.



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Upgrading that thermostat to a smart, Wi-Fi-enabled thermostat can help stabilize the temperature throughout those tough winter months and save money on air conditioning during the sweltering mid-summer days.

Smart thermostats
can save up to

15%

in heating and cooling costs,
giving you a way to save in
every season.





Incentives and Rebates

Many utility providers offer incentives for multifamily properties looking to implement energy-efficiency upgrades.

If you are a multifamily property owner or manager who would like to explore ways to improve your building grade, both in the short term and long term, call your utility provider for solutions that make sense, especially during these challenging and unique times caused by a pandemic.

Multifamily property owners can reach out to their utility provider to get more information on what support and solutions are available to help as they look to make energy performance improvements and increase their building grade.

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