

San Francisco Existing Buildings Ordinance

Quick Reference Guide

Existing Buildings Energy Performance Ordinance (EBO) — Environment Code Ch. 20

What Is San Francisco EBO?

San Francisco’s Existing Buildings Ordinance (EBO) requires owners of **nonresidential buildings 10,000+ sq ft** and **multifamily residential buildings 50,000+ sq ft** to benchmark **energy** use annually and complete **energy audits** every five years. **Note: The SF EBO covers energy only — there is no water benchmarking or water audit requirement under this ordinance.** The program supports San Francisco’s goal of net-zero emissions by 2040. A related ordinance also requires the largest commercial buildings to obtain **100% renewable electricity**.

Covered Buildings	Exempt Buildings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nonresidential: 10,000+ sq ft (heated/cooled) Multifamily residential: 50,000+ sq ft Municipal buildings: 10,000+ sq ft Administered by SF Dept. of Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New construction (<5 years old) ENERGY STAR certified (3 of past 5 years) LEED-EBOM certified (past 5 years) Vacant buildings / approved for demolition Buildings in financial distress Buildings with residential tenants (for EBO)

Two Core Requirements

Annual Energy Benchmarking	Five-Year Energy Audit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due May 1 each year Applies to BOTH commercial AND multifamily Track energy only via ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager Report to SF Dept. of Environment Satisfies both SF EBO & CA AB 802 Data published publicly by the city No water benchmarking required under EBO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required every 5 years for commercial buildings Multifamily buildings are EXEMPT from audits 10,000–49,999 sq ft: ASHRAE Level I Audit 50,000+ sq ft: ASHRAE Level II Audit Conducted by qualified professionals (PE/Architect) Submit Confirmation of Energy Audit (CEA) to City No water audit required under EBO

What You Need to Do & When

When	Requirement
Annual	Energy Benchmarking (Due May 1): Submit building energy use data to the SF Department of Environment using ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager. Applies to both commercial and multifamily 50,000+ sq ft. Energy only (no water data required).
Every 5 Years	Energy Audit: Complete ASHRAE Level I (10K–49,999 sq ft) or Level II (50,000+ sq ft) energy audit. City notifies owners 12 months in advance. Submit Confirmation of Energy Audit (CEA). Multifamily buildings are exempt from audits.
Ongoing	100% Renewable Electricity: Commercial buildings 50,000+ sq ft must obtain all electricity from renewable sources (Environment Code Ch. 30). Multifamily and mixed-use residential buildings of any size are not subject to this requirement.

Upcoming: Building Performance Standard (BPS)

San Francisco is developing a new **Building Performance Standard (BPS)** that is expected to be adopted by 2026, targeting existing commercial buildings over 20,000 sq ft with direct GHG emissions reduction targets focused on eliminating natural gas. Unlike the current EBO, which focuses on benchmarking and audits, the BPS will set **outcome-based emissions targets** with specific interim deadlines. San Francisco assumes 100% renewable electricity, so the BPS is laser-focused on reducing **direct carbon emissions from natural gas**. Building owners should begin assessing their natural gas footprint and planning for electrification now.

Penalties for Non-Compliance

Violation Type	Penalty
Buildings 50,000+ sq ft	Up to \$100/day (max 25 days = \$2,500/year)
Buildings 10,000–49,999 sq ft	Up to \$50/day (max 25 days = \$1,250/year)
Non-compliance disclosure	Published on City's public website + written notice

How Insight Energy Consulting Helps

You Provide	Insight Handles
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Building address & details  Utility account access  Building access for audit walkthroughs  Equipment documentation  Signature on submittals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Portfolio Manager setup & annual benchmarking  ASHRAE Level I & Level II energy audits  Audit exemption evaluation (ENERGY STAR / LEED)  Confirmation of Energy Audit (CEA) preparation  SF Department of Environment submissions  100% Renewable Electricity ordinance guidance  <u>BPS readiness assessment & electrification planning</u>  5-year audit cycle tracking & management

Insight Energy Consulting

Your nationwide one-stop Partner for Energy, Emissions, and Building Performance Standards

Request Your Compliance Plan Now

Insight Energy Consulting handles the entire process: Benchmarking, Energy Audits, Renewable Guidance, BPS Readiness, and Submission for San Francisco EBO.

Focus on running your building — we'll handle San Francisco BPO compliance

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