

# Denver Benchmarking Ordinance

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### How should I benchmark multiple buildings that share a meter?

Owners of multiple buildings that share one energy meter for one or more of their energy sources may comply with the ordinance by benchmarking those buildings together as a single building. We allow those buildings to be benchmarked as a single building if the owner prefers so that the user can take advantage of Xcel's offer to automatically upload monthly energy bill data to Portfolio Manager and so the owner can benchmark their buildings at the level that makes sense for their management strategy.

There may be compelling reasons to benchmark these shared-meter buildings separately, though, and we encourage owners to explore their options. For instance, if buildings have separate electric meters but a shared gas meter, an owner might find it valuable to benchmark the buildings separately since there might be a difference in the scores based on electric usage alone – such as if one building has undergone or might undergo a lighting upgrade when the other hasn't. Or, an owner may want to fully understand the energy performance of each building and so may manually split the natural gas monthly data by square footage of the buildings. Where multiple buildings share both electric and gas meters, we encourage owners to look into sub-metering. In addition to helping an owner better understand energy usage, sub-metering may enable the building to be eligible for ENERGY STAR certification if the building

has an ENERGY STAR score of 75 or higher. Only hotels, hospitals, K-12 schools, multifamily housing and senior care communities are eligible for certification as a campus today. For details on options for benchmarking multiple buildings as a campus see:

[https://www.energystar.gov/sites/default/files/tools/How\\_to\\_Benchmark\\_a\\_Campus\\_20140908\\_508.pdf](https://www.energystar.gov/sites/default/files/tools/How_to_Benchmark_a_Campus_20140908_508.pdf)

If you are benchmarking multiple buildings together because they share a meter please email [energizedenver@denvergov.org](mailto:energizedenver@denvergov.org) so we can update our covered buildings list accordingly.

### **How can I get whole building data if energy meters are owned by tenants?**

The owner of the building needs to benchmark and report for the whole building. For buildings with multiple Xcel account holders Xcel Energy will provide aggregated whole building monthly energy data to the building owner as long as there are four or more Xcel accounts in the building and no one account uses more than 50 percent of the energy. Refer to their [Energy Benchmarking User Guide](#) for more information. If your building has less than four accounts or one account that uses more than 50 percent of the energy, then you must [request customer consent](#) to obtain the data. You can have monthly energy data automatically uploaded to your account from [Xcel Energy](#) (recommended). Alternately, you can manually enter monthly energy meter data into your account.

### **How do you define buildings used primarily for industrial or agricultural purposes?**

A building is used primarily for industrial or agricultural purposes if the building is used for the manufacturing, growing, or assembling of goods and a significant portion of energy consumed in the building is consumed in support of those processes, i.e. is process load. Process load is energy consumed for processes other than conditioning spaces and maintaining the comfort and amenities for the occupants of a building, it refers to energy used in the actual manufacturing, production, or processing of a good, commodity, or other material. For example, a bottling plant or a marijuana grow house would each consume significant electricity for the manufacturing and growing processes respectively, and therefore would fall under our 'industrial or agricultural' definition.

If you believe your building qualifies for an exemption based on the definition above, please describe your process load in your exemption application such that we can understand that it is significant.

Distribution centers, warehouses and refrigerated warehouses are all benchmarkable space types and do not qualify for the industrial exemption. The EPA analysis showed that their Portfolio Manager model performs a fair comparison for warehouses, unrefrigerated warehouses and distribution centers.

## How can I access meter data if I am not the building owner? What are the data privacy rules to access data?

First, Xcel needs to verify that you have a relationship with the building owner. If you are not the building owner, Xcel will need to get you authorized on the building owner's Xcel Energy account at the property. This can be done by completing a consent form with the building owner as the customer of record. Alternatively, the building owner can contact Xcel Energy at 1-800-481-4700 and have them request to add you as an authorized contact on their account.

Consent forms and instructions for filling them out can be found at the following link:

[https://www.xcelenergy.com/billing\\_and\\_payment/customer\\_data\\_&\\_privacy/customer\\_energy\\_usage\\_data\\_release\\_forms](https://www.xcelenergy.com/billing_and_payment/customer_data_&_privacy/customer_energy_usage_data_release_forms)

Please reach out to the team at [datarequest@xcelenergy.com](mailto:datarequest@xcelenergy.com) for help with your consent form.

## How can I access whole building data for my condominiums?

Xcel will treat the condominium owner's association as the Property Owner in these cases. Please reach out to them at [benchmarking@xcelenergy.com](mailto:benchmarking@xcelenergy.com) if you have any questions setting up these properties.

## How do I correctly enter the number of units in a low, medium or high rise setting for multifamily properties?

For multifamily properties you must enter the number of units in low (1-4 floors), medium (5-9 floors), or high (10+ floors) rise settings. Most multifamily properties only have ONE setting. For example, if a building has 11 floors, then all units in that building are in a high rise setting. If a building has 8 floors, all units in that building are in a medium rise setting. The only time when a building have should units in more than one setting are if there is if two parts of the same building that are very different heights – for example one section of the building is a high -rise tower and the other section only has 3 floors.

## How should I benchmark my strip mall?

Strip malls are a benchmarkable space and should generally be benchmarked as one building. The building owner can receive aggregated whole building electricity and natural gas usage information from Xcel Energy, so they do not need to collect energy usage information from individual tenants. If one strip mall falls on multiple Denver parcels, as defined by the tax assessor, then each parcel should be benchmarked as a separate building. If, on a single parcel, a driveway divides the strip mall into two distinct buildings then each of those buildings should be benchmarked separately. Individual retail stores within a strip mall may be benchmarked and reported to the City as a separate building if it is a

space type that qualifies for an ENERGY STAR score. See the following link to learn [what kinds of retail properties can receive an ENERGY STAR score](#). If an individual retail store is going to be benchmarked and reported to the City as a separate building then the rest of the strip mall should be benchmarked separately. For example, if a King Soopers store located in a strip mall is going to send a benchmarking report to the City for just their store, then they should notify the owner of the strip mall so that the owner knows to benchmark the rest of the strip mall as one building, but to remove the square footage and energy usage of the King Soopers store from their report. Each building should report using their own Denver Building ID. If only one Denver Building ID was assigned to a property that will now be benchmarked as two separate buildings, then the building owner should request an additional Denver Building ID from the City by calling the help center at 844-536-4528.

### What energy units do electric and gas meters need to be set to?

Units for electricity are kWh and units for gas are Therms for Xcel Energy gas customers.

### What if I buy my gas from gas transportation providers, instead of Xcel Energy?

If you receive your natural gas from a third-party provider, Xcel Energy is not currently able to transfer this data to Portfolio Manager for you. Please work directly with your third-party provider in order to access this information. The units used on your natural gas bill may be something other than Therms. Please make sure the units on your bills match the units you enter into Portfolio Manager. Some transport gas suppliers show natural gas units as MMBtu. In this case, Mbtu should be selected in Portfolio Manager because Mbtu and MMBtu mean the same thing in this case.

### How should I enter District Steam and Chilled Water?

If you receive district steam and chilled water, Xcel Energy is not currently able to transfer this data to Portfolio Manager for you. District steam and chilled water customers configure your meters in Portfolio Manager as follows.

District Service	Meter Type	Units
Steam	District Steam	kLbs. (thousand pounds)
Chilled Water	District Chilled Water from an electric-driven chiller	ton hours

Note! Steam is billed by Xcel in Mlbs, this is the English system in which Mlbs means thousand, which is kLbs in the metric system used by Portfolio Manager. The Mlbs option in Portfolio manager is metric and means million pounds - so do not select Mlbs in Portfolio Manager.

## **How should I enter Onsite Solar or Wind Generation?**

For customers with a solar photovoltaic (PV) system or wind turbine, Xcel Energy currently is not able to transfer the electricity generation data to Portfolio Manager for you. Please refer to your Xcel Energy billing statements to access this information. Note that Xcel Energy will transfer the gross electricity provided to the site from the grid under the Electric Grid Meter in Portfolio Manager. You will need to create an additional Electric Solar Meter or Electric Wind Meter for the onsite generation system and enter the production data for that system with that meter. More information can be found at <https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/tools-and-resources/portfolio-manager-technical-reference-green-power>