



BER Assessors – Dwellings Technical Bulletin

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The archive of previous bulletins is available under
http://www.sei.ie/Your_Building/BER/BER_FAQ/FAQ_BER/Assessors/SEI_BER_Reports.html

Low energy lighting in unheated spaces

In quantifying the percentage of low energy lighting in a DEAP assessment, lighting in unheated spaces of a dwelling must be accounted for. Such areas would include unheated porches or garages. While such areas may not have been included in the assessment floor area, the lighting in these areas would be counted. Please refer to Appendix L of the DEAP manual for further detail.

Identification of primary and secondary heating system

As stated in Appendix A in the DEAP manual, the primary or main heating system is that which heats the largest proportion of dwelling.

With reference to Section A3.2 in the DEAP manual, consider a single storey existing dwelling, consisting of 6 habitable rooms (kitchen/dining room, living room, study room, 3 bedrooms) and 2 non-habitable rooms (hall and bathroom).

An oil heating system heats the following rooms:

- Kitchen/diner
- Study room
- Bedroom 1

An open fire heats the living room.

Fixed individual electric panel heaters heat the following rooms:

- Bedroom 2
- Bedroom 3
- Hall

The bathroom is unheated.

In this case, the oil heating system is entered as the main heating system. More than 50% of the dwelling is heated by fixed heaters and the oil heating system heats the greatest part of the dwelling relative to the other fixed heating systems.

The secondary heating system is specified as the open fire. While each of the fixed electric panel room heaters provides heat to a single habitable room, direct electric heating is marginally more expensive to run than the fire place. In addition, the fireplace is in the living room and is therefore more likely to be a more significant source of secondary heating than the electric heaters in the bedrooms.

Please refer to Appendix A (Primary and Secondary Heating Systems) for further guidance.

Survey equipment

In completing an on-site survey for an existing building, it should be ensured that any equipment used on site is functioning correctly. The Assessor should ensure that they have spare batteries for any digital equipment such as laser measuring devices, electronic compass or data storage devices. Ensure that all equipment is functioning correctly and is operated correctly. In establishing the orientation of dwelling, take a number of readings with a compass and ensure that there is no interference from any electrical devices or metal objects.

Definition of exposed perimeter when determining floor U-values

The exposed perimeter of a ground floor is the total length of the external wall dividing the dwelling ground floor from the external environment or from an unheated adjoining space. The part of the dwelling perimeter that adjoins (e.g. by a party wall) other heated properties (residential or commercial) is not included.

For example:

- If a dwelling adjoins an unheated garage on one side, the perimeter on that side is included when determining the ground floor U-value.
- However, the perimeter on a side adjoining the heated space of a neighbouring house would not be included in the total exposed perimeter when determining the ground floor U-value.
- But the perimeter on a side adjoining an unheated space (e.g. garage) of a neighbouring house would be included in the total exposed perimeter when determining the ground floor U-value.

When to include an attic in a DEAP assessment

As stated in Section 1 of the DEAP manual, attics should only be included in a DEAP assessment if they are habitable and accessed by a fixed staircase. This guidance applies regardless of whether the attic is heated or not.

A habitable attic would generally meet the following criteria:

- Part of the attic should be at least 2 m in height.
- The room should be “finished”. A finished room would typically have finished internal surfaces (walls and ceiling are papered and/or plastered and flooring is in place rather than having exposed joists and rafters).
- Attic Room has lighting and possibly a window/rooflight.
- Structural timbers not preventing free movement.
- Water cistern not present in the attic room.

Fuel types for solid fuel appliances

When selecting the fuel type for a solid fuel appliance, a number of factors must be taken into consideration. These are detailed in the BER FAQ under:

http://www.sei.ie/Your_Building/BER/BER_FAQ/FAQ_DEAP/Energy_Requirements/How_do_I_determine_fuel_type_and_efficiency_of_a_solid_fuel_heating_appliance.html.

Use of non default solar transmittance data

The March BER Technical Bulletin (available under

http://www.sei.ie/Your_Building/BER/BER_FAQ/FAQ_BER/Assessors/SEI_BER_Reports.html) referred to the use of non default data for solar transmittance of windows. As further clarification to this, when using non default solar transmittance data in DEAP, the certified data required must be produced in accordance with BS EN 410.

BER Assessments in the Home Energy Saving (HES) scheme

You will most likely be aware of the grants currently available under the Home Energy Saving scheme for homeowners to undertake a BER assessment Before and After grant aided works. On foot of a number of queries received at SEI and issues identified by us, we wish to bring your attention to a number of important considerations regarding this grant:

- The grant of €200 is to support homeowners who wish to undertake a BER BEFORE works (effectively to help identify the requisite works) and a second BER AFTER the works have been implemented (as a means of verifying the improvements achieved). It is vital therefore that the second BER not be conducted until all works to be grant aided are undertaken, and you should alert your clients to this fact at the time of the first BER.
- The BER grant is only available to homeowners who are undertaking other grant aided works – so they will not be paid for the BER in isolation, they must complete the works for which they applied and intend completing. Where homeowners request you to do otherwise please advise them that this will disqualify them from the grant scheme.
- The BERs are both to be treated as full BERs and both must be completed in full compliance with the BER Assessor Code of Conduct and both BERs must be fully published to the NAS. Note if the second BER is not published then the BER grant will not be paid.

Please note that these are very serious matters which merit your close attention and it is important to be aware that you are expected, under the professional conduct required under the BER Assessor Code of Conduct, to ensure that clients are fully and appropriately advised.