



# Preparing for NABERS office rating applications

**This guide will help you to identify and collate the information an Accredited Assessor will need to rate your office with NABERS. It can also assist you to collect data for a NABERS Self Assessment using the online rating calculators at [www.nabers.com.au](http://www.nabers.com.au)**

Note that you can only publish or promote Accredited Ratings performed by NABERS Accredited Assessors and approved by the Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW (DECC).

**Important Note:** An Accredited Rating Application is conducted by an Accredited Assessor in compliance with the relevant NABERS Validation Protocol, a detailed methodology for gathering, interpreting and using data in the Rating Application. This document is not intended to replace the Validation Protocol, rather it is a quick reference guide designed to aid customers and Assessors in the rating process. In some circumstances your Assessor may require more detailed information to perform your rating application.

## WHAT CAN YOU RATE?

NABERS ratings for offices are available for a range of environmental measures:

	Energy	Water	Waste	Indoor Environment	Transport
NABERS for Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ tenancy</li> <li>✓ base building</li> <li>✓ whole building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ whole building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ tenancy</li> <li>✓ base building</li> <li>✓ whole building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ tenancy</li> <li>✓ base building</li> <li>✓ whole building</li> </ul>	in development

The rating type you choose will depend on your circumstances:

Rating type	Covers	Applicable to
Tenancy	The tenanted space.	Tenant occupying a leased or privately owned office space within a commercial office building.
Base Building	Central services and common areas.	Building owner or property manager.
Whole Building	A combination of the above.	Building owner or property manager.

Different data is required for tenancy, whole or base building ratings.

## FINDING AN ACCREDITED ASSESSOR

The NABERS website ([www.nabers.com.au](http://www.nabers.com.au)) provides contact details for all Accredited Assessors. The cost of a rating can vary, depending on the type of rating you are performing and the size of the property. As with any professional service, we encourage you to obtain more than one quote to ensure you receive a competitive price for your rating application.

## THE RATING APPLICATION PROCESS

Your Accredited Assessor will calculate and then lodge your rating application with DECC. DECC will check that the rating application complies with the NABERS Validation Protocols, before certifying the rating application and producing a rating certificate. You will receive an electronic certificate, and framed certificates can be provided on request. DECC endeavours to process completed rating applications within three working weeks of their receipt. Note that this process may take longer if a rating application is found to not comply and follow up with the Accredited Assessor is required. Customers will be informed if their rating application is delayed for any reason.



## Data requirements for NABERS for office rating applications

### NABERS ENERGY FOR OFFICES

- Energy consumption data
- Net lettable area
- Number of computers
- Hours of occupancy



Note that submetering is required for tenancy or base building ratings. If there is inadequate submetering, a whole building rating should be performed.

#### Energy consumption data

Your Assessor will need copies of the utility bills for **all sources of energy consumed, such as electricity, gas, LPG, coal, oil, etc.** in the last 12 months, the latest bill to be no more than four months old.

The energy consumption data included in a rating is different for each rating type:

- > for tenancy rating – energy consumed by building occupants, such as tenant’s light and equipment and tenant-controlled supplementary air conditioning, etc.
- > for base building rating – energy consumed by central services, for example common area lighting, lifts, air conditioning, etc.
- > for whole building rating - combination of the above.

Your Assessor is primarily concerned with the consumption data, i.e. the amount of electricity in kWh or gas in MJ, rather than the energy costs, so please ensure that you provide full copies of the bills and not just the first page to your Assessor.

If you are having trouble finding a continuous record of energy bills for the most recent 12 month period, it may be easier to arrange for your Assessor to contact energy utilities to verify energy supply information. To arrange this, you will need to write a letter to your energy supplier granting your Assessor permission to access this data.

#### Net lettable area

Your Assessor will need documentation on the net lettable area (NLA) for:

- > tenancy rating - the tenancy space being rated
- > base building or whole building rating - all the tenancies in the building.

Your evidence of the NLA may include:

- > layout plans of the premises, or
- > lease documents.

The documentation must specify that the NLA is measured based on the Property Council of Australia (PCA) publication “Method of Measurement for Lettable Area” March 1997 or the BOMA 1989 or BOMA 1985 Method of Measurement.

It is important that the property area is current and valid for configuration of the premises during the rating period. If the plans are outdated or not available, you are advised to have the floor plans revised or prepared by a registered surveyor before commencing the rating process. Your Assessor will visit the site to check that the information sources match the current configuration of the tenancy.

Note that NABERS for offices only rates the office spaces. Where a tenancy or building includes areas that are not actually office areas and not used exclusively by office occupants, such as a café open to the public, an Assessor may exclude that area from the rating. Your Assessor will know the rule that applies when excluding an area from the rating.

If some areas were vacant during the rating period, you will have to provide details of vacant areas (NLA) and the exact dates that the space was vacated and/or re-occupied. An example is the lease documents that show these dates.

#### Number of computers

The total number of computers kept on the premises needs to be determined. A count of computers in regular use will be performed by your Assessor. You will need to give your Assessor permission to access your tenancy so that they can perform the computer count. The computer count for a whole building rating will take in all the computers for all the office tenancies in the building, whereas a tenancy rating considers the number of computers in that tenancy only.

This data is not required for base building ratings.

#### Hours of occupancy

For tenancy and whole building ratings the hours of occupancy equals the number of hours per week for which the premises has 20% or more of normal peak occupancy. This is determined by the Assessor who will survey your staff managers with a standard survey form. Surveyed managers should have a good idea of the arrival and leaving patterns for people in their area. You are encouraged to prepare a list of managers’ names and contact details to facilitate the survey.

To help your Assessor understand the occupancy patterns, you are encouraged to provide floor plans showing the office layouts marked up with the various business departments or team locations if such groups have different occupancy hours.

For base building ratings, the hours of occupancy are the agreed hours per week for which services are provided by the landlord to the tenants. This may include both core hours of service, i.e. regular hours requested by the tenant and defined in leasing documentation, and after-hours air-conditioning that is requested by the tenant where records exist.

#### NABERS WATER FOR OFFICES

- Water consumption data
- Net lettable area - as for the NABERS Energy whole building rating (see above)
- Hours of occupancy - as for the NABERS Energy whole building rating (see above)



Note that NABERS Water ratings are only available for whole buildings.

#### Water consumption data

Your Assessor will need copies of the bills for all externally supplied water consumed by the occupant(s), central services, landscaping and common areas of building in the preceding continuous 12 month period, including mains water, bore/well water, externally supplied recycled water (potable and non-potable) and dam/river water.

Your Assessor is primarily concerned with the consumption data, i.e. amount of water in kL or m<sup>3</sup>, rather than the water costs, so ensure that you provide full copies of the bills and not just the first page.

#### NABERS WASTE FOR OFFICES

- Mass of waste generated and waste recycled
- Number of computers - as for the NABERS Energy rating (above)



A NABERS Waste tenancy rating considers the total mass of waste that is generated by a single office tenant and their recycling efforts, whereas a whole building rating considers the total mass of waste generated by an office building including all of the

office tenants and their recycling efforts. A NABERS Waste base building rating only considers the recycling efforts of all office spaces within a building.

A NABERS Waste rating adopts a different benchmarking approach to the Energy and Water ratings. Where Energy and Water ratings use utility billing information as the primary data source, a Waste rating relies on audit data initiated by your Assessor.

#### Mass of waste generated and waste recycled

You will need to allow your Assessor to conduct a waste audit in your office **over ten consecutive working days** (between Monday and Friday; no weekends or public holidays are to be included in the audited days). More than 75% of full time equivalent staff who normally occupy the rated space must be present during the audit period.

The waste audit cannot occur in the following periods:

- > two weeks before or after the end of the financial year
- > within public school holiday periods
- > within January or February or in the last two weeks of December.

The waste audit data collected from the 10 sampling days is extrapolated to represent the previous 12 months of waste management practices.

The waste audit for a tenancy rating should involve either an audit, i.e. weighing of all waste disposal streams within your office, ensuring that no streams are missed, or auditing these streams as they leave the tenancy, possibly in the lift lobby, when collected by cleaners or contractors. It is not recommended that the audit be done at the main loading dock since extreme care should be taken that no other tenant's waste is included.

The waste audit for a base or whole building rating should be in a centralised location such as the loading dock where the building's waste is consolidated. However, consideration should be given to other waste disposal paths in addition to these centralised areas (i.e. secure recycling, toner cartridge and fluorescent tube collection, etc).

To help your Assessor plan for the waste audit, you should provide floor plans of your office(s) showing the locations of all waste disposal streams and possible sampling points.

## Data requirements for NABERS for office rating applications continued

### NABERS INDOOR ENVIRONMENT FOR OFFICES

- Net lettable area - as for the NABERS Energy rating (see above)
- Occupant Satisfaction Survey
- Site visit for collecting quantitative measurements.



The NABERS Indoor Environment Performance Rating is based on qualitative results from an occupant satisfaction survey and quantitative measurements of indoor environment parameters collected by your Assessor.

#### Occupant Satisfaction Survey

Your Assessor will liaise with you to create the distribution list and timing for the survey. Ideally, 100% of staff should be surveyed, however at least 75% of full time equivalent staff must be surveyed and at least 50% of the surveys completed for the rating to proceed.

You will be requested by your Assessor to distribute the survey by email to your staff at the beginning of the survey period. To encourage a better response rate, you should send out reminder emails to your staff four to eight business days following the initial email.

The Occupant Satisfaction Survey is not required for a NABERS Indoor Environment base building rating.

#### Site visit for collecting quantitative measurements

The site visit **must occur after** the survey has been completed. You will need to grant permission for your Assessor (or their sub-consultant) to visit your office, and plant rooms in the case of whole building ratings, to perform the quantitative measurements. On site measurements must be completed within four weeks of the completion of the survey.

The site visit has been designed such that the activities can be accommodated within typical occupancy hours, e.g. 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday excluding Public Holidays. In most cases, all site measurements can be taken within one day but this may not be possible for larger offices or if there are problems onsite on the day of the visit. Your Assessor can perform measurements over more than one day, but not more than five working days.

To help your Assessor to plan and organise the assessment, you will need to provide the following information:

- > floor plans of tenanted office space to show the arrangement of open plan office area as well as private rooms
- > leases that show hours of operation, vacancy schedules and thermal comfort conditions where applicable.

Where a rating is performed on a base or whole building, the Assessor will also require:

- > details of the number, location and type of ventilation system, e.g. mechanical, mixed mode or natural, and how each system distributes air to the tenanted spaces
- > copies of Building Management System (BMS) reports for temperature readings on all rated floors if available. If temperature readings from BMS reports are used, you will need to supply copies of calibration reports for the BMS sensors.

For more information on NABERS visit:  
[www.nabers.com.au](http://www.nabers.com.au)

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