

THE CITY OF AUSTIN'S ENERGY EFFICIENCY ORDINANCE HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

As Austin's population has increased, so has the demand for Austin Energy's services. The Climate Protection Plan was passed in February 2007 with the goal of increasing energy efficiency. Originally, the plan consisted of mandating costly energy efficient upgrades at the time a home was sold. The Austin Board of REALTORS® (ABoR) worked with City of Austin officials to limit the mandatory components of the Energy Efficiency Ordinance. The revised plan will help reduce energy consumption while keeping Austin housing affordable.

What is required?

Under the Energy Efficiency Ordinance, owners of homes that lie within the Austin city limits and are serviced by Austin Energy would be required to obtain an energy audit prior to selling their homes. Audit findings would then be disclosed as part of the standard seller's disclosure notice.

When does the ordinance go into effect?

The Energy Efficiency Ordinance is effective as of June 1, 2009.

How do I comply?

Because the energy audit is required as part of the seller's disclosure notice, it must be completed before the home sale closes. Homeowners interested in saving money on their utility bills and increasing their homes' energy efficiency are encouraged have their homes audited before they consider selling, as early audits can pinpoint simple ways to increase a home's energy efficiency. Additionally, under the current ordinance each energy efficiency audit will be good for 10 years, so having your home audited now can prevent a last minute scramble to comply with the ordinance.

Are there any exceptions?

Yes. Properties in foreclosure or pre-foreclosure; properties subject to eminent domain; transactions between family members; properties under court order, in probate proceedings or under decree of legal separation or dissolution of marriage are exempt. Additionally, properties fewer than 10 years old, manufactured homes designed for use without a permanent foundation and properties owned by participants in designated Austin Energy Electric Utility programs or buyers who agree in writing to participate in these programs within six months of the home purchase are also exempt. Your REALTOR® can help you determine whether your home is exempt from the Energy Efficiency Ordinance.

Who should I contact to find an auditor?

Your REALTOR® can help you find an auditor with the proper credentials for conducting an Austin Energy approved audit. Energy audits must be conducted by professionals who have been certified by either the Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) or the Building Performance Institute and who are registered by Austin Energy as approved contractors for this program. If you would prefer to look for an auditor on your own, visit www.austinenergy.com.

When considering buying or selling a home, always contact your local REALTOR® first. REALTORS® abide by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) Code of Ethics and are equipped with the information and experience to guide you through your real estate transaction. With expert knowledge in marketing and negotiation, as well as a wealth of professional resources, your REALTOR® will add value to every step of your home sale or purchase.