

Energy Management

Rising costs coupled with ever increasing concerns about the impact of carbon emissions from buildings on the environment has escalated the importance of energy consumption within organisations of all sizes. Energy Management is an umbrella term used to refer to the procurement and consumption of all energy used by an organisation including the design, construction and operation of the building itself.

There are a host of energy saving initiatives that can be carried out by any organisation but as with all good management exercises it is important to begin by establishing a baseline position and to put measurement protocols in place to monitor the effectiveness of the campaign. Site and plant inspections, meter readings and an examination of billing and consumption records are all essential starting points to any energy management initiative.

For most organisations the most effective energy saving measures are the most simple. Replacing light bulbs with energy-saving versions or fluorescent strip lights with smaller units can generate substantial savings when compared with the level of investment required. Turning off or reducing the settings on radiators located in low usage areas, ensuring that they are not covered or blocked by furniture and reviewing the positioning of thermostats to avoid draughts, sunlight or other heat sources can be highly effective. It is estimated that each degree dropped in temperature equals a saving of eight per cent in heating costs. Similar simple measures related to hot water, refrigeration, insulation and computer equipment can also prove fruitful.

All these actions should be underpinned by a robust maintenance regime to optimise plant performance and reduce operating costs. Consideration should also be given to the replacement of inefficient equipment with new energy saving technologies and products many of which come with tax incentives to support the investment. The Enhanced Capital Allowance scheme offers 100 per cent first year capital allowances on qualifying equipment which could write off the whole cost of the investment against taxable profits for the relevant period. Some equipment and renewable materials such as energy efficient central heating systems, solar panels and insulation also qualify for reduced rates of VAT.

The Carbon Trust is a government-funded organisation that provides free advice to business and the public sector on saving money through energy efficiency. It provides site energy surveys, interest-free loans and information on energy efficiency. Contact the Carbon Trust Advice Line on 0800 085 2005 or visit www.carbontrust.co.uk/energy