

HOMES



Energy Conservation Audit and Disclosure Ordinance

The City of Austin Energy Conservation Audit and Disclosure (ECAD) Ordinance, Austin City Code Chapter 6-7, is designed to help meet goals of the City of Austin Climate Protection Plan to offset 800 megawatts of peak energy demand by 2020, contributing to a reduction in the carbon footprint of the Austin community.

The ordinance took effect June 1, 2009.

Owners selling a home located within the City of Austin and receiving electricity from Austin Energy, the City of Austin's electric utility, are required to have a City of Austin ECAD audit unless the home meets one of the following:

- Is less than 10 years old at the time of sale
- Has participated in the Austin Energy Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program, or an equivalent Austin Energy program not more than ten years before the time of sale and either received at least three energy efficiency improvements **or** a total of \$500 in rebates through Austin Energy residential energy efficiency programs
- Has received free energy efficiency improvements through the Austin Energy Free Home Energy Improvements program within 10 years before the sale or the purchaser has signed an agreement to participate in this program within six months after the sale
- Is a condominium
- Is a mobile home that is manufactured housing built on a permanent chassis and designed for use without a permanent foundation
- Is a home changing ownership under one of the following:
 - Foreclosure sale, trustee's sale, or deed in lieu of foreclosure
 - Pre-foreclosure sale, where the seller has reached an agreement with a mortgage holder to sell the property for an amount less than the amount owed on the mortgage
 - Threat or exercise of eminent domain
 - Gift from one family member to another family member without consideration
 - Court order or probate proceedings
 - Decree or legal separation or dissolution of marriage or property settlement agreement incidental to such a decree

Variance

In addition to the exemptions listed, a home may receive a variance if it meets one of the following conditions:

- No later than six months after the sale, the buyer applies for a permit to demolish the home
- No later than six months after the sale, the buyer applies for a permit to substantially remodel the home

To apply for a variance, go to

www.austinenergy.com/go/ECAD and download the appropriate variance form online, print out, fill out, sign and mail to Director of Energy Efficiency Services, Austin Energy, 721 Barton Springs Road, Austin, TX 78704.

Information on Energy Efficiency Improvements

Austin Energy will provide the dates of energy efficiency improvements or rebates received by a home or dates and details on free energy efficiency improvements received through Austin Energy programs. Simply e-mail a request for information along with the address of the home and your telephone number to conservation@austinenergy.com or call 974-7827.

When a Home Needs an Audit

An ECAD audit must be performed by an auditor certified with either a Building Performance Institute (BPI) Building Analyst Professional or a certified Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) Rater. Auditors who register with Austin Energy, attend an ECAD orientation and meet insurance liability requirements are listed on the Austin Energy Web site.



What the audit involves

An ECAD audit will take about one hour per thousand square feet of home. The ECAD auditor:

- Inspects and measures the attic insulation in multiple areas
- Pressure tests the duct system and assesses its condition and adequacy
- Assesses physical condition of the heating and cooling equipment
- Inspects weather stripping around exterior doors, plumbing penetrations beneath sinks and air tightness of attic entries
- Identifies and measures the amount of glass in windows that receive more than one hour of direct sunlight each day

Cost of the audit

ECAD audits are comprehensive and require specialized equipment for testing the duct system. The estimated cost of an audit is \$200–\$300 for a typical single-family home of 1,800 square feet or smaller, with one air conditioning system. Prices may be higher for larger homes. Auditors set their own prices.

ENFORCEMENT

Non-compliance with the ECAD Ordinance is a Class C misdemeanor. Reported violations will be forwarded to the City of Austin Legal Department for review and action.

RESOURCES

AUSTIN ENERGY offers customers energy efficiency information and programs, including information about rebates and low-cost loans for efficiency improvements, and programs intended to help homeowners and businesses increase comfort and energy savings. Federal tax credits may also be available.

Please visit www.austinenergy.com or call **974-7827**.



For more information on the Energy Conservation Audit and Disclosure Ordinance, please visit

www.austinenergy.com/go/ECAD

or call **974-7827**.

Results of the audit

Following an ECAD audit, the homeowner will receive a report from the auditor that includes the following:

- Condition and estimated R-value of attic insulation
- Percentage of air leakage from the duct system and its condition and adequacy
- Age, efficiency and overall condition of heating and cooling equipment
- Air leakage potential around exterior doors, plumbing penetrations beneath sinks and attic entries
- The total square feet of glass and location of windows receiving more than an hour of direct sunlight each day
- Recommendations for improving energy efficiency in all areas examined

The homeowner must provide a copy of the audit to a prospective buyer prior to the time of sale. The auditor is responsible for delivering a copy of the audit to Austin Energy within 30 days of audit completion.

Energy Efficiency Improvements

The ECAD Ordinance does not require homeowners to make energy efficiency improvements. However, Austin Energy offers rebates and low-cost loans to homeowners who want to improve their home's efficiency.

Perfect Time to Make Efficiency Improvements



Austin Energy and **Texas Gas Service** customers are eligible for rebates from both utilities when adding attic insulation and repairing ducts, plus a federal tax credit on insulation. These incentives pay up to **33%** of the cost of the insulation and up to **56%** of the cost of duct repair—the two most frequent energy efficiency improvements for older homes. Austin Energy rebates and federal credits are also available on new air conditioning equipment, solar screens and more.

Over the past five years, 23,800 residential customers reduced their energy use by 38 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) through efficiency improvements, lowering electric bills by \$3 million.