

# Following the *New Leed: Version 3*

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With the roll-out of Version 3, the new LEED certification and professional accreditation systems are in effect. Vocabulary. "LEED Version 3" is the umbrella of changes to the certification and professional accreditation systems. "LEED 2009" is the new version of the rating system, for example, the successor to LEED v.2.2.

### **Timeline.**

Feb. 28: Last day to register for LEED v.2.2 exam

Apr. 27: LEED Version 3 launches

June 26: Last day for new projects to register under LEED v2.2 system

Fall: Version 3 professional exam available

Oct. 24: Last day for LEED v2.2 projects to convert to LEED v.2009 without a fee

### **Part 1: Rating System Changes.**

**Overview.** The changes are designed to address concepts raised in credit interpretation requests and rulings, to standardize the point totals between the various LEED systems, to give more weight to the credits that have more significant impact, and to adapt the LEED system to keep pace with changes in design and construction.

**Minimum Program Requirements.** Now, any new construction project must comply with seven program requirements to be eligible for LEED certification. These requirements are in addition to the LEED credit prerequisites.

1. Comply with environmental laws
2. Be a complete, permanent building
3. Use a reasonable site boundary
4. Minimum of 1000 sf floor area
5. Meet specified minimum occupancy rates
6. Report annual building and water use data
7. Comply with building area to site ratio

**Water/Energy Data Reports.** A building must report annual water/energy data in one of three ways:

1. Recertify building every 2 years through the operation and maintenance program
2. Provide energy/water data to GBCI annually
3. Sign a waiver allowing GBCI to access utility bills directly

This requirement can be waived on some types of buildings where

reporting is not practicable, such as military bases, university campuses, and buildings with central plants.

**Point Breakdowns.** To standardize the ratings among the systems, all LEED systems are now rated on a 100-point scale. Breakdowns for levels are as follows:

Certified 40-49 points

Silver 50-59 points

Gold 60-79 points

Platinum 80+ points

**Reweighting Credits.** LEED 2009 gives more weight to credits with greater impact to surrounding environment. More notable increases include:

SS2 Development Density (1 to 5 pts)

SS4 Alt. Transportation (1 to 6 pts)

WE3 Water Use Reduction (1 to 4 pts)

EA1 Energy Performance (10 to 19 pts)

EA2 Onsite Renew. Energy (3 to 7 pts)

EA5 Measmt & Verification (1 to 3 pts)

MR1 Building Reuse (1 to 3 pts)

**New Prerequisite.** In addition to the six prerequisites under the v2.2 system, v2009 includes a seventh prerequisite mandating 20% water efficiency. Water efficiency is measured below a baseline case calculated by comparing the designed building to a similar baseline building with the same requirements. This prerequisite used to be an available credit, now it is a requirement for all LEED buildings.

**Regional Priority Credits.** The system now includes points for "regional priority credits." This change is in response to criticism of LEED for being a one-size fits all approach to building that did not recognize unique characteristics of different climates. The regional credits are not new requirements. Local and regional chapters of USGBC each designated six existing points that are a regional priority for a given area.

Each zip code has six identified points. A building is eligible for up to four additional bonus points, one for each of the first four regional priority credits the building targets and achieves. The LEED Online system will automatically determine the applicable points by the property address listed for the project.

The USGBC website contains a list of all regional credits, by zip code. For example, one Las Vegas zip code includes the following priority credits: SSc6.1, SSc7.1, WEc1, WEc3, EAac2, MRc2. A Denver zip code includes SSc2, SSc6.1, WEc1, WEc3, EAac1, and EAac2.

**Part 2: Professional Accreditation Changes.Overview.** The professional accreditation system has been overhauled. The system now recognizes three levels of accredited professionals and imposes continuing education (CE) requirements. The USGBC's goals for the professional system are to (a) stay current with education, (b) differentiate with different

levels of accomplishment, and (c) allow for specialization.

**Three Levels.**

LEED Green Associate (non technical)

LEED AP (technical expertise required)

LEED AP Fellow (advanced and specialized)

Each of these levels must pass the LEED Green Associate exam plus fulfill the requirements of that level.

**Green Associate.** LEED Green Associate must meet one requirement of (a) documented involvement on LEED project, (b) employment in sustainable field of work, or (c) completion of education program that addresses green building principles. This designation is for practitioners with non-technical experience and denotes basic knowledge of green design, construction, and operations.

**LEED AP.** The LEED AP reflects advanced knowledge in green building practices and reflects a specialty in a rating system. One must take the green associate exam and take a specialty exam based on one of the LEED rating systems. The specialty exams exist for the following systems:

Operations & Maintenance

Homes

Building Design & Construction

Interior Design & Construction

Neighborhood Development (avail. 2010)

**LEED AP Fellow.** The GBCI is still establishing the parameters for this level, but has announced that this level is to recognize professionals who are part of "extraordinary class of leading professionals" and who have extensive experience in green building.

**Continuing Education.** All professional accreditations must be maintained on a 2-year CE cycle. Green Associates must receive 15 hours of approved CE every 2 years and LEED AP's must receive 30 hours of CE every 2 years. Courses must be approved by GBCI and will include some self-study options.

**Grandfather Option.** All LEED AP's accredited before August 3, 2009 are exempted from the CE requirements, unless specifically electing into the new system. Professionals accredited under previous systems will maintain their existing accreditation.

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