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LEED v3 Frequently Asked Questions

What is LEED Version3?

LEED v3 is the next version of the LEED green building certification system. Launching on April 27, 2009, LEED v3 builds on the fundamental structure and familiarity of the existing rating system, but provides a new structure for making sure the rating system incorporates new technology and addresses the most urgent priorities like energy use and CO2 emissions. LEED v3 consists of three components:

- LEED 2009: technical advancements to the LEED Green Building Rating Systems' credits and points
- LEED Online: an upgrade to LEED Online that is faster and easier to use, featuring new help options
- New building certification model: an expanded certification infrastructure based on ISO standards, administered by the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI) for improved capacity, speed and performance

Which LEED Rating Systems will be changing?

The new version of the LEED Rating System – LEED 2009 – will incorporate the existing commercial and institutional building rating systems: New Construction, Core and Shell, Commercial Interiors, Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance and Schools.

Will the LEED Reference Guides Change?

The reference guides have been consolidated into three books that address buildings by type and phase: Green Building Design & Construction, for the rating systems that address new buildings; Green Interior Design & Construction, for the rating systems that address interior spaces; and Green Building Operations & Maintenance, for the rating systems that address the operations and maintenance of existing buildings.

When will the new reference guides be available?

The new reference guides are now available for purchase from the USGBC Website. E-book reference guides are available for \$140 and hard-copy guides are \$150 for USGBC members.

USGBC LEED Workshop attendees will receive a \$25 discount on one printed corresponding LEED Reference Guide. 300-level (advanced) workshop participants also receive a free 30-day access period to download and save a non-printable personalized PDF copy of the guide.

What notable new technical advancements will be reflected in the new LEED 2009 Rating System?

Notable technical advancements include:

- LEED Prerequisite/Credit Alignment and Harmonization
- Transparent Environmental/Human Impact Credit Weighting
- Regionalization

LEED Prerequisite/Credit Alignment and Harmonization – The LEED credits and prerequisites have been consolidated, aligned and updated to reflect their “most effective common denominator,” providing a consistent pool of prerequisites and credits across the commercial and institutional LEED Rating Systems. A scrub of the existing Credit

Interpretation Rulings (CIRs) was conducted and necessary precedent-setting and clarifying language has been incorporated into the prerequisites/credits.

Transparent Environmental/Human Impact Credit Weighting –With revised credit weightings, LEED now awards more points for strategies that will have greater positive impacts on what matters most – energy efficiency and CO2 reductions. Each credit was evaluated against a list of 13 environmental impact categories, including climate change, indoor environmental quality, resource depletion and water intake, among many others. The impact categories were prioritized through the consensus of subject matter experts across the building and environmental sciences, and credits were assigned a value based on how they contributed to mitigating each impact. The result revealed each credit's contribution to the big picture, giving the most value to credits that have the highest potential for making the biggest change – which means the credits with the greatest impact on priority issues earn more points towards a LEED rating.

Regionalization – Through USGBC's regional councils, chapters and affiliates, regionally specific environmental priorities were identified. Depending on a project's specific location, six LEED credits that address regionally prioritized environmental issues have been assigned "bonus points." That means that a project can be awarded up to four extra points – one point each – for up to four of the priority credits.

What if I am currently working on a LEED project?

LEED projects registered under previous versions of the rating system can be "upgraded" to LEED v3 after April 27, or they can continue using the version of LEED under which they originally registered. Only projects registered under a LEED 2009 rating system will have access to the new version of LEED Online.

When does registration under the current LEED rating systems end?

Projects will be unable to register a new project for LEED v2 after June 26, 2009. After that date, new projects will be required to use LEED v3.

If I register my project under a current LEED rating system, will I be required to switch to LEED v3?

No. Projects registering under the current LEED rating systems will have the option to upgrade to LEED v3 at any time, or they can continue to use the version of LEED under which they originally registered.

If I choose to transition my current project to LEED v3, will I have to pay a new registration fee?

Not if you upgrade your project to LEED 2009 before October 24, 2009.

Will the LEED 2009 Rating System apply to LEED for Homes and LEED for Neighborhood Development?

No. At this time, LEED 2009 is only for commercial and institutional building applications and their existing rating systems (LEED for New Construction, Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance, Commercial Interiors, Schools and Core & Shell).

How will LEED 2009 affect LEED for Retail and LEED for Healthcare?

LEED for Retail, which is currently in pilot, and LEED for Healthcare, which is currently under development, will be aligned with LEED 2009 at a later date. More information will be available prior to the launch of these rating systems.

How will LEED 2009 affect the LEED AP (Accredited Professional) Program?

The Green Building Certification Institute is expanding its LEED professional accreditation program so that it continues to represent a professional's knowledge of the most current version of the LEED rating systems. In order to maintain alignment with the new LEED 2009 rating systems, candidates will only be able to register to take the current LEED for Commercial Interiors 2.0 and LEED for New Construction 2.2 Accredited Professional (LEED AP) exams until March 31, 2009. All testing for these exams must be completed by June 30, 2009.

For more information visit: www.gbci.org.

What if I'm already a LEED Accredited Professional (LEED AP)?

Current LEED APs have three options:

1. Upgrade your LEED AP credential by enrolling in the new system, and earn a specialization. This involves agreeing to the Credentialing Maintenance Program (CMP), signing the Disciplinary Policy and completing the prescriptive CMP requirements for the initial two-year reporting period. Once enrolled, LEED APs will use one of the new specialty designations (O&M, BD&C, ID&C) after their name. Enrollment must occur before June 2011.
2. Become a LEED AP under the new system and earn a specialization by passing one of the new specialty examinations; only part two of the new LEED AP exam will be required for current APs who take the test by June 2011. When applying for the exam, APs will need to sign the Disciplinary Policy and agree to the CMP. Completion of the ongoing CMP is required for the designation and use of one of the new specialty designations (O&M, BD&C, ID&C) after their name.
3. Do nothing; remain a designated LEED AP without a specialty title in the LEED Professional Directory.

What if I want to become a LEED AP?

Visit the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI) www.gbci.org for information on the LEED professional credentialing program.

What about USGBC educational offerings?

USGBC will remain the primary source for LEED and green building education, both for building and design practitioners looking to learn more about implementing LEED into their projects and for aspiring LEED AP candidates. USGBC has already begun to roll out LEED 2009-aligned instructor-led workshops, online courses, and Webinars (live and on-demand). To learn more about how USGBC's LEED curriculum is being adapted and expanded, visit www.usgbc.org/education.

USGBC's educational offerings and those available through the [Education Provider Program](#) will support the pursuit and maintenance requirements for the LEED AP credential. USGBC and Education Provider Program courses can be found on www.greenbuild365.org.

USGBC's LEED Core Curriculum, which addresses LEED 2009 and credentials, includes:

- *Green Building Basics & LEED* (100-level instructor-led workshops or online-anytime courses) – For beginners and those new to LEED.

- *LEED Core Concepts & Strategies* (200-level instructor-led workshops; available online in spring 2009) – For professionals who are seeking an understanding of LEED, but may not be involved in implementation, or who are seeking the LEED Green Associate credential from GBCI.
- Green Building *LEED Implementation Process* workshops (300-level instructor-led; available now for Green Building Operations & Maintenance; roll-out this year of Green Home Design & Construction, Green Building Design & Construction (Commercial New Construction) and Green Interior Design & Construction) – For project teams implementing LEED, as well as professionals pursuing any of the new LEED AP credentials.

For more information about LEED v3, visit www.usgbc.org/leedv3