



Commercial Interiors

Version 2.0

REFERENCE GUIDE

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**U.S. Green Building Council
1800 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036**

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LEED for Commercial Interiors Core Committee

Penny Bonda (Chair), Environmental Communications
Keith Winn (Vice-Chair), Catalyst Partners
Gina Baker, Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates
Kirsten Childs, Croxton Collaborative Architects, P.C.
Holley Henderson, H2 Ecodesign, LLC
Don Horn, U.S. General Services Administration
Scot Horst, 7 Group
Liana Kallivoka, Austin Energy Green Building Program
Jill Kowalski, EwingCole
Fran Mazarella, U.S. General Services Administration
Roger McFarland, HOK
Denise Van Valkenburg, Steelcase Inc.
Ken Wilson, Envision Design
Theresa Hogerheide-Reusch (Advisor), Catalyst Partners
John Stivers (Advisor), Catalyst Partners

Special thanks to: John Stivers, Catalyst Partners for his significant contributions to the creation of the LEED for Commercial Interiors Reference Guide

Energy & Atmosphere TAG

Greg Kats (Chair), Capital-E
Marcus Sheffer (Vice-Chair), 7group
Saad Dimachkieh, HOK
Chad Dorgan, Farnsworth Group, Inc.
Jay Enck, Commissioning & Green Building Services
Donald Fournier, Building Research Council
Jonathan Heller, Ecotope Inc.
Tia Heneghan, Sebesta Blomberg
John Hogan, City of Seattle Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use
Bion Howard, Building Environmental Science
Michael Lorenz, Kling
Cheryl Massie, Flack + Kurtz
Brenda Morawa, BVM Engineering, Inc.
Erik Ring, CTG Energetics, Inc.
Mick Schwedler, Trane Company

Indoor Environmental Quality TAG

Bob Thompson (Chair), EPA Indoor Environments Management Branch
Steve Taylor (Vice-Chair), Taylor Engineering
Jude Anders, Johnson Controls, Inc.
Terry Brennan, Camroden Associates
Brian Cloward, Mithun
Larry Dykhuis, Herman Miller, Inc.
Greg Franta, Ensar Group, Inc.
Francis Offerman, Indoor Environmental Engineering
Christopher Schaffner, The Green Engineer
Dennis Stanke, Trane Company

Materials & Resources TAG

Nadav Malin (Chair), BuildingGreen, Inc.
Kirsten Ritchie (Vice-Chair), Scientific Certification Systems
Paul Bertram, PRB Design
Chris Dixon, Mithun
Ann Edminster, Design AVenues
Lee Gros, Austin Energy Green Building Program
Debra Lombard, RETEC
Nancy Malone, Siegel & Strain Architects
Dana Papke, California Integrated Waste Mgmt. Board
Wayne Trusty, Athena Institute
Denise Van Valkenburg, Steelcase
Melissa Vernon, Interface Flooring Systems
Mark Webster, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger
Gabe Wing, Herman Miller, Inc.

Sustainable Sites TAG

Bryna Dunn (Chair), Moseley Architects
Susan Kaplan (Vice-Chair), Battery Park City Authority
Ann Abel Christensen
Gina Baker, Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann
Ted Bardacke, Global Green USA
Stephen Benz, Judith Nitsch Engineering, Inc.
Mark Brumbaugh, Brumbaugh & Associates
Meg Calkins, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (and ASLA representative)
Stewart Comstock, Maryland Department of the Environment
Jay Enck, Commissioning & Green Building Services
Jim Frierson, Advanced Transportation Technology Institute
Ron Hand, G&E Environmental
Richard Heinisch, Acuity Lighting Group
Michael Lane, Lighting Design Lab
Mark Loeffler, The RETEC Group, Inc.
Marita Roos, Andropogon Associates
Zolna Russell, Hord Coplan Macht, Inc.
Eva Wong, U.S. EPA Heat Island Reduction Initiative (HIRI)

Water Efficiency TAG

David Sheridan (Chair), Aqua Cura
John Koeller (Vice-Chair), Koeller and Company
Gunnar Baldwin, TOTO USA, INC
Neal Billetdeaux, JJR
David Carlson, Columbia University
Bill Hoffman, City of Austin - Water Conservation
Heather Kinkade-Levario, ARCADIS
Geoff Nara, Civil & Environmental Consultants
Shabbir Rawalpindiwalla, Kohler Company
Stephanie Tanner, National Renewable Energy Laboratory
Bill Wall, Clivus New England, Inc.
Bill Wilson, Environmental Planning & Design, LLC

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Foreword from USGBC

The built environment has a profound impact on our natural environment, economy, health and productivity. Breakthroughs in building science, technology and operations are now available to designers, builders, operators and owners who want to build green and maximize both economic and environmental performance.

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is leading a national consensus to produce buildings that deliver high performance inside and out. Council members work together to develop industry standards, design and construction practices and guidelines, operating practices and guidelines, policy positions and educational tools that support the adoption of sustainable design and building practices. Members also forge strategic alliances with key industry and research organizations, federal government agencies and state and local governments to transform the built environment. As the leading organization that represents the entire building industry on environmental building matters, our unique perspective and collective power provide our members with enormous opportunity to effect change in the way buildings are designed, built, operated and maintained.

USGBC Membership

The Council's greatest strength is the diversity of our membership. USGBC is a balanced, consensus nonprofit representing the entire building industry, consisting of over 5000 companies and organizations. Since its inception in 1993, USGBC has played a vital role in providing a leadership forum and a unique, integrating force for the building industry. Council programs are:

- **Committee-Based.** The heart of this effective coalition is our committees in which members design strategies that are implemented by staff and expert consultants. Our committees provide a forum for members to resolve differences, build alliances and forge cooperative solutions for influencing change in all sectors of the building industry.
- **Member-Driven.** The Council's membership is open and balanced and provides a comprehensive platform for carrying out important programs and activities. We target the issues identified by our members as the highest priority. We conduct an annual review of achievements that allows us to set policy, revise strategies and devise work plans based on members' needs.
- **Consensus-Focused.** We work together to promote green buildings and in doing so, we help foster greater economic vitality and environmental health at lower cost. The various industry segments bridge ideological gaps to develop balanced policies that benefit the entire industry.

Contact the U.S. Green Building Council

1800 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 828-7422 Office
(202) 828-5110 Fax
www.usgbc.org

Introduction

What Does “Green” Mean?

“Green” has become the shorthand term for the concept of sustainable development as applied to the building industry. Also known as high-performance buildings, green buildings are intended to be environmentally responsible, economically profitable, and healthy places to live and work.

I. Why Make Your Building Interiors Green?

The building sector has a tremendous impact on the environment. Buildings in the United States consume more than 30% of our total energy and 60% of electricity annually. They consume 5 billion gallons of potable water per day to flush toilets. A typical North American commercial construction project generates up to 2.5 pounds of solid waste per square foot of floor space. The industry appropriates land from other uses such as natural habitats and agriculture. These are just a few examples of the environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of buildings.

Green building practices can substantially reduce these negative environmental impacts and reverse the trend of unsustainable construction activities. As an added benefit, green design measures reduce operating costs, enhance building marketability, increase worker productivity, and reduce potential liability resulting from indoor air quality problems. For example, energy efficiency measures have reduced operating expenses of the Denver Dry Goods building by approximately \$75,000 per year. Students in day-lit schools in North Carolina consistently score higher on tests than students in schools using conventional lighting fixtures. Studies of workers in green buildings reported productivity gains of up to 16%, including reductions in absenteeism and improved work quality,

based on “people-friendly” green design. At a grocery store in Spokane, Washington, waste management costs were reduced by 56% and 48 tons of waste was recycled during construction. In other words, green design has environmental, economic and social elements that benefit all building stakeholders, including owners, occupants and the general public.

II. LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System™

History of LEED®

Following the formation of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) in 1993, the membership quickly realized that a priority for the sustainable building industry was to have a system to define and measure “green buildings.” USGBC began to research existing green building metrics and rating systems. Less than a year after formation, the membership followed up on the initial findings with the establishment of a committee to focus solely on this topic. The diverse initial composition of the committee included architects, realtors, a building owner, a lawyer, an environmentalist and industry representatives. This cross section of people and professions added a richness and depth both to the process and to the ultimate product.

The first LEED Pilot Project Program, also referred to as LEED v1.0, was launched at the USGBC Membership Summit in August 1998. After extensive modifications, the LEED Green Building Rating System v2.0 was released in March 2000. This rating system is now called LEED for New Construction and Major Renovations, or LEED for New Construction.

As LEED has evolved and matured, the LEED program has undertaken new initiatives to address the many different stages

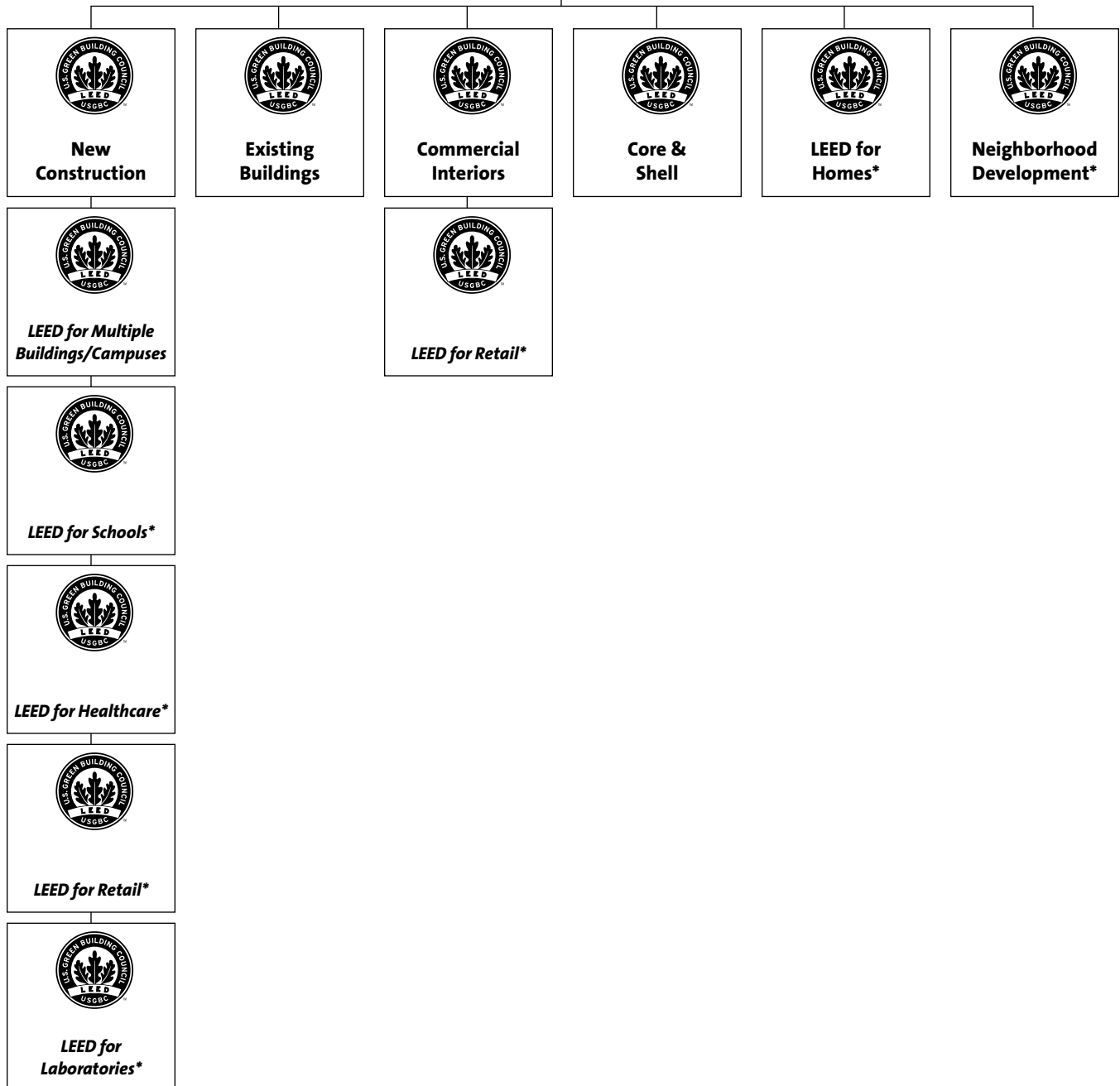
and sectors of the U.S. building market
aside from LEED for New Construction.

LEED for Commercial Interiors is part of
the growing portfolio of Rating System
products serving specific market sectors
(see chart, below).

Rating System Product Portfolio



** under development as of September 2006*



Features of LEED

The LEED Green Building Rating System™ is a voluntary, consensus-based, market-driven building rating system based on existing proven technology. It evaluates environmental performance from a whole building perspective over a building's life cycle, providing a definitive standard for what constitutes a "green building." The development of the LEED Rating System was initiated by the USGBC membership, representing all segments of the building industry and has been open to public scrutiny.

The Rating System is organized into five environmental categories: Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy & Atmosphere, Materials & Resources, and Indoor Environmental Quality. An additional category, Innovation & Design Process, addresses sustainable building expertise as well as design measures not covered under the five environmental categories.

LEED is a measurement system designed for rating new and existing commercial, institutional and high-rise residential buildings. It is based on accepted energy and environmental principles and strikes a balance between known established practices and emerging concepts.

It is a performance-oriented system where credits are earned for satisfying each criterion. Different levels of green building certification are awarded based on the total credits earned. The system is designed to be comprehensive in scope, yet simple in operation.

The Future of LEED

The green design field is growing and changing daily. New technologies and products are coming into the marketplace and innovative designs are proving their effectiveness. Therefore, the Rating System and the Reference Guide must evolve as well.

USGBC will highlight new developments on its Web site on a continuous basis at www.usgbc.org.

III. LEED for Commercial Interiors Overview and Process

The LEED for Commercial Interiors Rating System provides a set of performance standards for certifying tenant projects with USGBC. The specific credits in the rating system provide guidelines for the design and construction of tenant spaces in government and private sectors for office, retail, restaurant, healthcare, hotel/resort and education building applications. Tenants are defined as those who pay rent to use or occupy a building, occupants who dwell in a place, and/or holders of buildings such as ownership or lease. The intent of LEED for Commercial Interiors is to assist in the creation of high performance, healthful, durable, affordable and environmentally sound commercial interiors. LEED for Commercial Interiors addresses:

- ☐ Sustainable Sites
- ☐ Water Efficiency
- ☐ Energy & Atmosphere
- ☐ Materials & Resources
- ☐ Indoor Environmental Quality
- ☐ Innovation in Design

When to Use LEED for Commercial Interiors

Many projects will cleanly and clearly fit the defined scope of only one LEED rating system product. For other projects, two or more LEED rating system products may be applicable. USGBC encourages the project team to tally a potential point total using the rating system checklists for all possibilities. The project is a viable candidate for LEED certification if it can meet all prerequisites and achieve the minimum points required in

a given rating system. If more than one rating system applies, then it is up to the project team to decide which one to use. For assistance in choosing the most appropriate LEED rating system, please e-mail leedinfo@usgbc.org.

LEED for Commercial Interiors Registration

Project teams interested in obtaining LEED certification for their projects must first register their intent with USGBC. Projects can be registered on the USGBC Web site (www.usgbc.org) in the LEED section, under Register Your Project. The Web site includes information on registration costs for USGBC member companies as well as non-members. Registration is an important step that establishes contact with USGBC and provides access to the LEED-Online software tool, errata, critical communications, and other essential information.

About LEED-Online

As of January 2006, project teams pursuing LEED for Commercial Interiors certification are required to use LEED-Online, which enables teams to submit 100% of their documentation online in an easy-to-use format. LEED-Online stores all LEED information, resources, and support in one centralized location. LEED-Online enables team members to upload credit templates, track Credit Interpretation Requests, manage key project details, contact customer service, and communicate with reviewers throughout the design and construction reviews.

Credit Interpretation Rulings

In some cases, the design team may encounter challenges in applying a LEED for Commercial Interiors prerequisite or credit to their particular project. These difficulties arise from instances where the Reference Guide does not sufficiently address a specific issue or there is a special conflict that requires resolution. To ad-

dress such issues, USGBC has established the LEED for Commercial Interiors Version 2.0 Credit Interpretation Ruling (CIR) process (separate from the CIR page for version 1.0 CIRs). See the LEED for Commercial Interiors section of the USGBC Web site for more information at www.usgbc.org. The Credit Interpretation process is summarized as follows:

1. Project teams should review the CIR Web page to read previously posted credit interpretation requests and USGBC responses. Many questions can be resolved by reviewing existing CIRs and the Reference Guide. Note that CIRs for other rating systems (LEED for Existing Buildings, LEED for Core & Shell, LEED for New Construction, and past versions of LEED for Commercial Interiors) are not necessarily applicable.
2. If no existing Credit Interpretation Rulings are relevant to the project, the LEED project team should submit an on-line credit interpretation request. The description of the challenge encountered by the project team should be brief but explicit; it should be based on prerequisite or credit information found in the LEED for Commercial Interiors Rating System and Reference Guide; and it should place a special emphasis on the intent of the prerequisite or credit. If possible, the project team should offer potential solutions to the problem and solicit approval or rejection of their proposed interpretation. Follow the detailed instructions in the "CIR Guidelines" document available on the CIR Web page in the LEED section of the USGBC Web site.
3. USGBC will rule on requests electronically according to the posted schedule, either through a posting on the CIR Web page or via e-mail correspondence.

LEED for Commercial Interiors Application

Once a project is registered, the project design team begins to collect information and perform calculations to satisfy the prerequisite and credit submittal requirements. Since submittal documentation should be gathered throughout design and construction, it is helpful to designate a LEED team leader who is responsible for managing the compilation of this information by the project team. Use the LEED-Online Submittal Templates that are provided through the LEED project resources Web page located in the LEED section of the USGBC Web site. These templates contain embedded calculators, and are instrumental in documenting fulfillment of credit requirements and prompting for correct and complete supporting information.

Two-Phase Application

A new feature of LEED for Commercial Interiors v2.0 is the option of splitting a certification application into two phases. Rather than submitting all documentation for a project at the end of the construction phase, project teams will be able to submit designated “design phase credits” at the end of the design phase for review by USGBC. Design phase credits are those credits that USGBC can reasonably adjudicate based on design phase documentation. For example, if a project site meets the LEED for Commercial Interiors Sustainable Sites Credit 3.1: Alternative Transportation, Public Transportation Access, USGBC can assess the likelihood of the project achieving this credit prior to the completion of construction.

It is important to remember that LEED credit is not awarded at the design review stage. Project teams are notified of the likelihood that their project will achieve a LEED credit if construction is executed in accordance with design phase plans. Projects must submit verification that design

elements were implemented as planned after completion of construction.

A list of the potential design phase credits can be found in the LEED section of the USGBC Web site. Project teams are allotted one design phase review. At the completion of construction, the balance of attempted credits, verification of design phase credits, and additional documentation for those design phase credits that have changed since the design phase review, are documented and submitted for USGBC review. See below for more details regarding the two-phase review.

Review and Certification

To earn LEED for Commercial Interiors certification, the applicant project must satisfy all of the prerequisites and a minimum number of points to attain the established LEED for Commercial Interiors project ratings as listed below. Having satisfied the basic prerequisites of the program, applicant projects are then rated according to their degree of compliance within the rating system. All projects will need to comply with the version of LEED for Commercial Interiors that is current at the time of project registration.

Design Phase Review

Once USGBC has received the complete design phase application and the design phase fee (which is a portion of the total certification fee), USGBC will formally rule on the application by designating each attempted credit as either Anticipated or Denied. No certification award will be given at this time, nor will any credits be awarded. This process gives project teams the opportunity to assess the likelihood of credit achievement, and requires follow through to ensure the design is executed in the construction phase according to design specifications.

Construction Phase Review

At the completion of construction, the project team will submit all attempted

credits for review. If the project team had elected to have a design phase review, and any of the design phase Anticipated credits have changed, additional documentation must be submitted to substantiate continued compliance with credit requirements. For design phase Anticipated credits that have not substantively changed, the project team must submit verification that the design has been executed in the construction phase per requirements. Once USGBC has received the complete application and fee (the remainder of the total certification fee, if a design review has been conducted), USGBC will formally rule on the full application. All applicant-verified design phase credits that were designated as Anticipated and have not changed since the design phase review will be declared as Achieved. All other credits will be designated as either Achieved or Denied.

Appeals

Appeals may be filed after either the design phase review or the final review. Please see the LEED for Commercial Interiors section of the USGBC Web site for more information on appeals.

Fees

Certification fee information can be found in the LEED for Commercial Interiors section of the USGBC Web site. USGBC will acknowledge receipt of application and proceed with application review when all project documentation has been submitted. The LEED for Commercial Interiors ratings are awarded according to the following scale:

- ☐ Certified 21-26 points
- ☐ Silver 27-31 points
- ☐ Gold 32-41 points
- ☐ Platinum 42-57 points

USGBC will recognize buildings that achieve one of these rating levels with a formal letter of certification and a mountable plaque.

Updates & Addenda

This current version is the third edition of the LEED for Commercial Interiors Reference Guide dated October 2006. As LEED for Commercial Interiors continues to improve and evolve, updates and addenda will be made available to substitute and augment the current material. USGBC cannot be held liable for any criteria set forth herein, which may not be applicable to later versions of LEED for Commercial Interiors. Updates and addenda will be accumulated between revisions and will be formally incorporated at the major revision points approximately every three years. In the interim between major revisions, USGBC may use its consensus process to clarify criteria.

When a project registers for certification, the prerequisites and credits current at the time of project registration will continue to guide the project throughout its certification process.

IV. LEED for Commercial Interiors Reference Guide Version 2.0

The LEED for Commercial Interiors Version 2.0 Reference Guide is a supporting document to the LEED for Commercial Interiors Green Building Rating System™. The Reference Guide is intended to assist project teams in understanding LEED for Commercial Interiors criteria and the benefits of complying with each criterion. The Reference Guide includes examples of strategies that can be used in each category, case studies of buildings that have implemented these strategies successfully, and additional resources that will provide more information. The guide does not provide an exhaustive list of strategies for meeting the criteria as subsequent strategies will be developed and employed by designers that satisfy the intent of each credit. Nor does it provide all of the information that design

teams need to determine the applicability of a credit to their project.

Prerequisite and Credit Format

Each prerequisite and credit is organized in a standardized format for simplicity and quick reference. The first section summarizes the key points regarding the measure and includes the intent, requirements, required submittals for certification and a summary of the referenced standard. The subsequent sections provide supportive information to help interpret the measure and offer links to various resources and examples. Also, please note that each credit section lists the additional documentation you may be asked to present in the event of an audit.

If your project team encounters an out-of-date Web link in the Reference Guide, please go to the root Web site, which should take the form of www.organization.com with no additional text following. Then you may be able to navigate through the Web site to find the referenced document. Please contact USGBC at (202) 828-7422 if you have trouble finding a resource.

