

Overview of the LEED Rating System

What is LEED?

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating Systems™ encourages and accelerates global adoption of sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of universally understood and accepted tools and performance criteria.

Inception

LEED began its development in 1994 spearheaded by Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) Senior Scientist Robert K. Watson, who as Founding Chairman of the LEED Steering Committee until 2006, led a broad-based consensus process which included non-profit organizations, government agencies, architects, engineers, developers, builders, product manufacturers and other industry leaders. From 1994 to 2006, LEED grew from one standard for new construction to a comprehensive system of six interrelated standards covering all aspects of the development and construction process. LEED was created to accomplish the following:

- Define "green building" by establishing a common standard of measurement
- Promote integrated, whole-building design practices
- Recognize environmental leadership in the building industry
- Stimulate green competition
- Raise consumer awareness of green building benefits
- Transform the building market

The rating system addresses six major areas:

- Sustainable sites
- Water efficiency
- Energy and atmosphere
- Materials and resources
- Indoor environmental quality
- Innovation and design process

Certification

Different LEED versions have varied scoring systems based on a set of required "Prerequisites" and a variety of "Credits" in the six major categories listed above. In LEED v2.2 there are 69 possible points and buildings can qualify for four levels of certification:

- Certified - 26-32 points (non-innovation points)
- Silver - 33-38 points
- Gold - 39-51 points
- Platinum - 52-69 points

LEED certification is obtained after submitting an application documenting compliance with the requirements of the rating system. Certification is granted solely by the U.S. Green Building Council responsible for issuing the LEED system used on the project.

How does a building or project earn LEED points?

There are a number of factors that can go into a building or project earning LEED points. The material used in construction is a main component, but it's more than just using recycled products in a building. Factors such as the buildings location to mass transit, the distance materials have to travel in order to get to the job site, and how the materials are packaged could possibly earn LEED points. Even installing a bike rack can earn LEED points.

Can products be certified under LEED?

No. LEED applies to green building projects. Individual products can contribute to earning points under the LEED system, but the products themselves are not certified. In attempting to meet LEED requirements, LEED practitioners identify products that have desired attributes. However, some LEED criteria do require specific product data as part of a successful submittal.

For example, ClearPath's LaserGlow™ material may help to contribute points towards the “energy and efficiency” category for LEED certification for a building, as it eliminates the need for an external power source for egress and emergency signage. However, the LaserGlow™ product itself is not and cannot be LEED certified.

ClearPath is happy to provide pertinent information about our products that may help a designer, contractor, or builder earn points toward LEED certification. This may include information about the primary components of our products, their recycled content, where our materials are manufactured, and our overall corporate sustainability statement.

Benefits of Certification

LEED certification is a third-party validation of a building's performance. LEED certified projects blend environmental, economic, and occupant-oriented performance. They cost less to operate and maintain; are energy and water efficient, and are healthier and safer for occupants, demonstrating the values of the organizations that own and occupy them.

NOTE:

This document was created for ClearPath customers and distributors to help give a brief overview of the LEED process and was provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be used as a reference piece for LEED certification. ClearPath is not affiliated in any way with the Green Building Council. Any questions about specific LEED certification requirements should be directed to the U.S. Green Building Council at 1-800-795-1747.