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Guidance for Certifying Attached Buildings Separately

September 20th, 2010

This guidance has been posted prior to the publication of Version 2 of the [LEED 2009 MPR Supplemental Guidance Document](#) to accommodate immediate customer needs. Version 2 will include this guidance, which encompasses the totality of current USGBC guidelines on when two or more attached buildings may be considered separate for the purposes of LEED.

Please keep in mind:

- ALL buildings applying for LEED certification must independently meet ALL the [Minimum Program Requirements](#). This refers to the square footage within the LEED Project Boundary, NOT any buildings that the LEED project is attached to.
- Buildings that do not strictly comply with the criteria listed in this document but have attributes that clearly separate them may still qualify. Project teams with such a situation are encouraged to contact GBCI via this website for consideration: <http://www.gbci.org/customerserv.aspx>
- Project teams that determine that their attached building complies with this document must state their case within Project Information form #1, available once the building is registered with GBCI via [LEED Online v3](#). Prior approval via customer service is not necessary.
- Version 1 of the MPR Supplemental Guidance does not recognize vertically attached buildings as separate, and imposes stricter guidelines for horizontally attached buildings than those found here. The guidance in this document supersedes Version 1, and Version 2 will include this guidance.

For any building attached to a LEED certified building

If an addition/attached building is connected to another building that is already LEED certified, the addition/attached building may be considered a separate building for LEED purposes with no additional requirements or caveats. This rule may be applied with any combination of rating systems for either the existing building or the proposed LEED project. There is a single caveat for those existing buildings with LEED for Commercial Interiors-certified space: 90% of the gross floor area of the existing building must be certified in order for an addition to certify without additional requirements under this rule.

Horizontally Attached Buildings

Structures that are horizontally attached but otherwise separate may be recognized as distinct buildings and apply separately to LEED if the following criteria are met:

- 1) The project is certifying under any building design & construction (BD&C) version of LEED, including LEED for New Construction, LEED for Schools, LEED for Core and Shell, or LEED for Retail: New Construction (once available). Projects using LEED for EB: O&M may NOT use this new guidance for horizontally attached buildings.



- 2) The project is "ground-up" new construction and NOT a major renovation of an existing structure.
- 3) A separate address and name, including a distinguishing word such as 'addition' or 'wing', is given to the certifying building. The same name must be used for all purposes – title of the LEED project as registered with USGBC / GBCI, in formal publications, internal and external property listings and databases, signage, etc.
- 4) LEED certification is accurately communicated. This means that all promotional/descriptive material produced by the owner or on the owner's behalf clearly distinguishes the LEED certified building from any other that it is attached to. Additionally:
 - the difference between the two spaces is clearly communicated to building users via signageOR
 - if the LEED certification of the building is confidential, the project team may opt to not communicate the fact of LEED certification at all. In other words, no signage, marketing, or publicity of any kind may announce the LEED certification.
- 5) The ability of the LEED certification reviewer to fairly evaluate the certifying building is not compromised. This means that all building components of the LEED project that are addressed by LEED prerequisites and pursued credits (systems, materials, etc) are separate or separable for the purposes of the LEED review, from the building to which it is attached.
For credits and prerequisites that deal with mechanical systems, the project team has two choices:
 - a) HVAC systems are completely separate from those in the existing building
 - b) [DES guidance](#) is used if a central plant services the buildings

Vertically Attached Buildings

(This portion of the guidance was originally posted on April 27, 2010, and has not changed substantively since)

Structures that are vertically stacked but otherwise separate may be recognized as distinct buildings and apply separately to LEED if the following criteria are met:

- 1) The certifying gross floor area is no less than 20% of the overall structure
- 2) The certifying gross floor area is contiguous
Multiple floors are acceptable, but non-certifying floors between certifying floors is not.
- 3) If LEED for Commercial Interiors (LEED CI) is appropriate for certifying the space, according to the guidance in the Rating System Selection policy, then certification under LEED CI is pursued.



4) The following features are separate:

a. Address

The difference in address names may be slight. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that the LEED project is listed as a separate building in databases such as COSTAR.

b. Name

c. Ownership

d. Management OR space usage type

e. Energy usage meter

Every energy source servicing the building must be separately metered.

f. Water usage meter

Any water use within the LEED Project Boundary – including landscape irrigation – must be separately metered.

g. HVAC systems

h. Exterior entrance and circulation areas

If these features are shared, the project team can do one of the following as an alternative compliance path:

- *Clearly communicate to building users the difference between the two spaces*
OR
- *Not communicate the fact of LEED certification at all*

If the project team uses one of these alternative compliance paths, the shared circulation space still may not be within the LEED project boundary.

The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that building users do not perceive areas of the structure to be LEED certified when they are not.

5) Features that may be shared include:

Fire safety infrastructure *Includes sprinklers, stairwells, and alarm systems.*

Exterior items *This means that exterior space and associated features (walkways, etc) may be designated for use by all occupants of the vertically stacked buildings. However, if the land is within the LEED Project Boundary, it is subject to LEED requirements. Guidance for drawing the LEED Project Boundary can be found in the [MPR Supplemental Guidance](#). In general, the same requirements apply to all LEED Projects – all land that is associated with and supports normal building operations must be included.*