

By Dan Geiger, Executive Director, USGBC-Northern California Chapter

What is LEED 2009? When does it take effect? How will it affect my current and future LEED projects? What about LEED AP? Should I get accredited now? Will my LEED AP be valid later this year? What are the new AP requirements?

These are but a few of the questions about U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) rollout of LEED 2009, which was previewed this past November at the annual USGBC GreenBuild convention in Boston. Don't miss USGBC-Northern California Chapter's (USGBC-NCC) upcoming LEED 2009 updates—www.usgbc-ncc.org—which will explore the many changes you can expect in 2009.

LEED 2009 is a major evolution in the USGBC's green building rating system. The new version of LEED includes a series of major technical advancements focused on improving energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions and addressing other environmental and human health outcomes. LEED 2009, also known as LEED 3.0, will feature highly anticipated regional credits—extra points identified as priorities within a project's given environmental zone. A re-weighting of credits has changed the allocation of points among LEED credits to reflect climate change and energy efficiency as urgent priorities.

Highlights of LEED 2009

LEED Prerequisite/Credit Alignment and Harmonization—LEED 2009 will consolidate, align and update all existing LEED Rating Systems into their most effective common denominator providing a pool of prerequisites/credits for all 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.

A Predictable Development Cycle—LEED will have a predictable 2 year development cycle that will help drive continuous improvements in LEED and allow the market to participate more fully in LEED's growth and development.

Transparent Environmental/Human Impact Credit Weighting—LEED has undergone a scientifically grounded re-weighting of credits, which will reflect more accurately a credit point impact on the environment and human health.

Regionalism—Incentives will be provided through LEED Innovation & Design style bonus points that will add value to those credits that are considered most important for defined regions.

LEED 2009 certification is currently scheduled to go live in March 2009. Projects registering under the current LEED rating systems will have the option to upgrade to LEED 2009 during the transition time when the new system launches with LEED online, or they can continue to use the version of LEED under which they registered.

Green Building Certification Institute, Accreditation

A new organization, Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI), www.gbci.org, has been created by USGBC to manage the extraordinary growth in demand for LEED certification and the new LEED accreditation programs. As of January 2009, GBCI will take over certification of LEED buildings. To expand certification capacity, the new certification program will utilize third-party certifying bodies to expedite project review.

GBCI will also manage the new LEED accreditation system, which features three accreditation levels, additional requirements for LEED AP, continuing education requirements and revamped examinations.

- A new LEED Green Associate accreditation is scheduled to be introduced in May 2009. LEED Green Associates will be required to pass a 2 ½ hour Tier 1 exam, which encompasses an overview of green building design, construction and operations;
- The revised LEED AP will require passing the Tier 1 exam and a Tier 2 exam in a specific LEED category, such as LEED Building Design and Construction (the new LEED NC), LEED Existing Buildings Operations and Maintenance (LEED EBOM), or others such as LEED-Homes or LEED-Neighborhood Design. This accreditation is designed for practicing building professionals and will require demonstrable professional experience on a LEED project;
- LEED AP Fellow is for leading professionals who have made major contributions to standards of practice or contributed a significant body of knowledge to green building;
- Legacy LEED AP: current APs will be required by June 11, 2009 to sign a disciplinary policy and agree to additional credentialing requirements. Current LEED APs will be required to take the Tier 2 exam within 2 years to maintain their AP.

For more information on the new credentialing system, please spend some time exploring www.gbci.org.

New Exams

With new accreditations and LEED systems come new examinations. After LEED 2009 launches, accreditation exams will be updated to reflect the changes. New examinations will be phased in starting in May, through the fall of 2009. If you would like to become a LEED AP before the new exams and systems take effect, **you must register for the current LEED for Commercial Interiors 2.0 or LEED for New Construction 2.2 exams by March 31, 2009.** You can take the exam after March 31st, but must register by then. It is no longer possible to register for the LEED for Existing Buildings version 2.0 exam. Go to www.gbci.org to register for an examination.

LEED Education Program

The USGBC is also developing a redesigned education program for LEED and green building, which will be available through USGBC-Northern California Chapter (USGBC-NCC) starting in the second quarter of 2009. During the first quarter of 2009, USGBC-NCC will continue to offer LEED and exam preparation workshops for the current versions of LEED NC and CI, as well as LEED EBOM. The Chapter is also introducing a new series of workshops on a variety of topics on how to implement green building practices.

The new curriculum structure developed by national USGBC will include:

- 1) a 100-level series to provide general awareness about green building and LEED
- 2) a 200-level series that will focus on core LEED credits and intents—appropriate for a LEED Green Associate Accreditation
- 3) a 300-level series that supports the new LEED AP+ and focuses on implementation issues within a particular LEED specialty.

You can find an overview of the new curriculum at www.usgbc.org—go to Education, USGBC Courses, Learn about recent changes. For information and to register for local

USGBC technical reviews and upcoming Northern California Chapter workshops, go to www.usgbc-ncc.org.

Projected LEED Credentialing and Examination Timeline

FEBRUARY 2009

LEED Green Associate Exam - **Beta Test**

LEED AP + Operations and Maintenance Exam - **Beta Test**

MARCH 2009

LEED AP + Homes Exam - **Beta Test**

SPRING 2009

LEED Green Associate Exam - **Launch**

LEED AP + Operations and Maintenance Exam - **Launch**

LEED AP + Design and Construction/Interior Design and Construction - **Beta Test**

New Candidate Application

SUMMER 2009

LEED AP + Homes Exam - **Launch**

LEED AP + Design and Construction/Interior Design and Construction - **Launch**

New Credentialing Maintenance Program - **Launch**

For more information about LEED 2009, visit www.usgbc-ncc.org and click on Update: 2009 and New LEED Accreditation Program.