



LEED Canada Credit Interpretation Request Process

For LEED Canada NC, CS, CI and EB:O&M projects

March 17, 2011

Preface

This document was prepared in order to provide guidance on the LEED Canada Credit Interpretation Request (CIR) Process. It contains important information for how CIRs are to be prepared. Failure to comply with the guidance provided may result in CIRs being delayed.

In this document, the following short forms will be used:

- LEED Canada NC: LEED Canada for New Construction and Major Renovations
- LEED Canada CS: LEED Canada for Core & Shell Development
- LEED Canada CI: LEED Canada for Commercial Interiors
- LEED Canada EB:O&M: LEED Canada for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance

Overview

DID YOU KNOW?

CIRs are clarifications, not new requirements; therefore they apply to all projects that are not yet certified. The CaGBC does not impose new requirements through the CIR process, and neither credit language nor achievement thresholds can be changed through the CIR process.

In some cases, project teams may encounter difficulties applying a LEED prerequisite or credit to a specific project. Registered projects are able to submit formal inquiries, called Credit Interpretation Requests (CIRs). The CaGBC has an established process for reviewing CIRs to ensure that rulings are fair and consistent.

There is a charge for each CIR submitted. Note that only the main contact for a project can request a CIR for a given project. The CIR must relate to the project in question.

A database of CIRs is available to all CaGBC members, as well as the main contact for any project.

Note that US Green Building Council (USGBC) CIRs are reviewed by the CaGBC prior to finalizing all LEED Canada CIRs. However while USGBC CIRs are reviewed for reference they do not automatically apply to LEED Canada.

Similarly, CIRs for one Canadian rating system are not necessarily applicable to projects pursuing other Canadian rating systems.

Before Submitting a CIR

Before submitting a CIR applicants must:

- Review the intent of the credit or prerequisite in question and self-evaluate whether the project meets this intent.
- Consult the appropriate LEED Reference Guide for more detailed explanation, instructions, calculations and guidance.
- Review the CIR database on the CaGBC website to see if the same inquiry has been answered previously, or if there are relevant CIRs that can help you deduce the answer. Many questions can be resolved by reviewing existing CIRs. Note that CIRs for other rating systems and CIR rulings from the USGBC are not necessarily applicable but can be referenced.

Submitting a CIR

DID YOU KNOW?

Your project team is welcome to ask CIRs on your project during the certification review process up until the time you send your final submission. In fact, the review team may encourage you to do so in order to clarify if your alternate approach is considered acceptable by CaGBC's Technical Advisory Group.

If a CIR is needed, a new CIR may be submitted by the project's main contact using the online form.

The description of the challenge encountered by the project team should be brief but explicit; be based on prerequisite or credit information found in the Rating System and Reference Guide; and emphasize the intent of the prerequisite or credit.

The project team should offer potential solutions to the problem and solicit approval or rejection of their proposed interpretation.

Additional guidance is provided below.

- Do not state the name of the project, the credit name, or your contact information; the database automatically tracks this data.
- Do not include confidential project details; the submitted text will be posted on the CaGBC Web site.
- Do not format the CIR as a letter. Submit only the inquiry and essential background information.

- Inquiries must request guidance on just one credit or prerequisite, and generally contain one concise question, unless there are compelling technical reasons to do otherwise. It is often helpful to discuss the inquiry within the context of the credit's intent.
- CIR submission text is limited to 4000 characters including spaces.
- There is no mechanism for submitting cut-sheets, plans, drawings or attachments; these documents are not necessary for a clearly stated inquiry.
- Please title your CIR with an appropriate, succinct title.
- Please provide a summary question that captures your entire issue. Refer to other posted CIRs for how the questions are summarized as "Summary Question".
- Please proofread text for clarity, readability, spelling and grammar.

Note that credits are not awarded through the CIR process. The process is designed to provide feedback to the project applicant on the likely outcome of a proposed strategy. Credit Interpretation Rulings do not guarantee credit award; the project applicant must still demonstrate and document credit achievement (including adherence to the guidance offered by the CIR) during the LEED Certification Process.

The inquiry and ruling must be submitted with the LEED project's documentation when submitted for certification, in order to ensure effective credit review.

Rulings are communicated to applicants by e-mail and are posted to the CIR database. Complex CIRs take longer to be ruled on.

CIR Appeal Process

Credit Interpretation Requests (CIRs) are ruled on by CaGBC's Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs), formed of volunteer experts in LEED and in various building subject matters. Applicants may appeal CIR rulings if they believe them to be in error or if new technical information becomes available. Appeals are reviewed by the LEED Canada Steering Committee (LCSC), which sets directions and overall policy on LEED Canada products.

If the original applicant wishes to initiate an appeal, they must do so within 20 business days following the receipt of the final CIR ruling.

Applicants wishing to appeal a CIR ruling should prepare an electronic letter/email that outlines their concern with the ruling. Applicants are encouraged to provide any research or documentation that may be available to support their appeal. This documentation should be emailed to the LEED Technical Coordinator responsible for the CIR, along with a hard copy with the applicable fee.

After soliciting TAG feedback, CaGBC staff will prepare a briefing note, providing your information and summarizing TAG discussions, for the LCSC . The LCSC meets every second week. The decision of the committee will be considered final and will be provided to the applicant by the LEED Technical Coordinator.

Please note that payment of the appeal fee (currently \$750 plus applicable taxes) is required to initiate the appeal process. Appeal fees are refundable if it is shown that the original ruling body made an inappropriate decision with the information that was provided to them. Cheques should be made payable to the **Canada Green Building Council**, and sent to:

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Ottawa ON K1N 9K1
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