



# LEED Canada Certification Process

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

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## Preface

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This document was prepared in order to provide project teams guidance on the LEED Canada Certification Process. It contains important information for how LEED Canada submissions are to be prepared. Failure to comply with the guidance provided may result in submissions being delayed during the certification process.

In this document, the following short forms are 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

## Documentation

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Once a project is registered , the project team begins to prepare documentation and calculations to satisfy the prerequisite and credit submittal requirements. The documentation required is outlined in the applicable Reference Guide, addendum, Application Guides, and the LEED Letter Templates. The LEED Letter Templates, provided in a Microsoft Excel document, should be filled in for all prerequisites and each credit attempted. Ensure that each prerequisite/credit is completed and signed by the appropriate responsible party.

*A ‘responsible party’ as used in the LEED reference guides and letter templates must be capable of determining that the credit intent and technical requirements are met.  
The responsible party must prepare or check that the credit requirements are met.*

Proper documentation is critical to the successful certification of a project. It is helpful to have a LEED Accredited Professional as the project contact and team member responsible for coordinating the LEED process. For LEED Canada-NC 1.0 projects, team members, especially the LEED consultant, are strongly encouraged to participate in the CaGBC’s LEED Canada-NC 1.0 Documentation Course.

## Where to Find Documentation Requirements

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The documentation requirements may be found in several documents, as outlined below.

**Reference Guides** - The LEED Canada Reference Guides are the primary direction for projects undergoing certification.

**LEED Letter Templates** - The templates never supersede the Reference Guides for version 1.0 rating systems. However for the version 2009 rating systems (NC, CS, and EB:O&M), the templates supersede the Reference Guides for documentation submission requirements.

**Credit Interpretation Requests (CIRs)** - CIRs are clarifications to the Reference Guide and so are considered to be of equal precedent to the Reference Guide.

**Application Guides (NC v1.0 only)** – The following application guides provide alternative compliance paths that help your project to achieve credits under LEED Canada-NC v1.0 for a project that is a multi-unit residential building, on a campus, or using leased tenant space, respectively:

- Application Guide for Multi-Unit Residential Buildings (MURB)
- Application Guide for Campus and Multiple Buildings (including Interpretation Guide for District Energy Systems)
- Application Guide for Core and Shell Buildings and Leased Tenant Space in LEED Canada-NC

Core and Shell v1.0 projects must use the Application Guide for Core and Shell Buildings and Leased Tenant Space in LEED Canada-NC in conjunction with the LEED Canada NC 1.0 Reference Guide plus addendum (released September 2007).

Where allowances have been provided previously in Reference Guide Interpretations or CIRs, these application guides supersede all previously allowed paths for projects registered after their release. For projects registered before the release of the application guides, those projects can use pathways provided by interpretations or earlier CIRs. Where no guidance was previously given for an alternative pathway, then all projects, regardless of their registration date, must adhere to the application guide. For example, if your project is on a campus and you wish to achieve SSc4.4 (Alternative Transportation: Parking Capacity) through use of a campus parking strategy, then your project must use the Campus and Multiple Building Application Guide or apply for a new CIR for an alternate approach because there was no previous allowed approach for campus shared parking.

**Addendum to LEED Canada-NC v1.0 Rating System and Reference Guide, with February 2008 errata –**

This is a requirement for all projects registered to LEED Canada-NC version v1.0 on or after February 29, 2008. Projects registered prior to that date may adopt pathways from the addendum on a credit by credit basis (i.e., must adopt all changes to each credit used from the addendum). This addendum also incorporated the December 2005 errata to LEED Canada NC v1.0.

**LEED Canada NC 2009 and LEED Canada CS 2009** – Specific credits are available for substitution for LEED Canada NC v1.0 and LEED Canada CS v1.0 projects. See the Allowance Table (on the CaGBC web site) for further details on which credits can be substituted.

## Organizing Documentation for Submittal

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### **SUBMISSION TIP:**

*Before sending the initial certification submission for your project, the very best thing that you can do as a LEED consultant is read the submittal requirements side-by-side with the entire submittal to ensure that it is complete.*

As of April 1, 2010, binders are no longer accepted for the LEED Canada certification review process. Please transfer all documentation to electronic format following the instructions provided below.

The files should be organized into folders. **LEED Canada 2009 projects must structure their folders as per the submittal list provided in the LEED Letter Templates.** The file folder structure to be used for version 1.0 projects is outlined below.

- Overview folder:
  - Excel version of the LEED Letter Template.
  - The narrative to provide the certification review team with an understanding of your project including the project's scope, site and major design elements. It should describe the selection of the site boundaries with direction to the site plan (or include as attachment). Include description of any issues that may be pertinent to the overall review of the project. However the narrative should be concise – no more than 2 pages of text should be required. Narratives for individual credits should not be included here but rather with the credit information, where necessary.
  - Application Matrix, in the case of a project that is certifying under LEED Canada NC or CS v1.0 and is using a mix of addendum, application guide and LEED 2009 credits. The Application Matrix may be found on the CaGBC website.
  - Any other general information.
- LEED Submittals folder:
  - One sub-folder for each credit category.
  - All documents related to a given credit can be stored together in one file, marked by the credit number (e.g., EQc4.3). Or, if there are multiple files per credit, please organize these into subfolders for each credits. Please avoid unnecessary subfolders (i.e. folders with one file in them).
  - Use numbering or acronyms for folder and file names where possible (e.g., SS, SSc3, etc.) – long folder and file names do not upload properly to our server.
  - Do not use French accents on folder or file names as they cause problems in file transference.
  - Documents should be in PDF format where possible to ensure readability.
- Project Drawings folder:
  - To ensure legibility, create PDF's of drawings from the electronic documents rather than scanning paper copies, where possible.

- Organize into subfolders (i.e., Arch, Elec, Mech, Landscape).
- Include a drawing list to ensure no drawings are missed.
- Drawings must include:
  - site, context and landscaping plans
  - typical floor plans, building sections and elevations
  - schematic diagrams of major electrical and mechanical systems
  - window, lighting and HVAC equipment schedules and tables.
- Site boundary drawing: Please provide a drawing that clearly indicates the site boundary. If using the campus pathways for credits, also include a campus drawing with boundaries clearly noted. It is also useful for LEED Canada CI projects to provide a site boundary drawing along with a drawing of where the project is located within the building.
- Project Photos folder:
  - JPEG's or PDF's are acceptable.
  - Ensure that photos fully illustrate the project including building elevations and the primary entrance to the building. All projects certifying under the addendum to LEED Canada-NC 1.0 must also provide interior photos and several photos taken at different times during construction (e.g. site work, foundations, main building frame, envelope work, fit-up, finished product). These are strongly encouraged for pre-addendum projects as well.
  - Interior photos are required for LEED Canada-CI projects.
  - These photos will be used to assist the review team on the certification of the project and do not need to be professional photos. Once the project is certified, we will contact the owner's marketing contact for media quality photos.

**SUBMISSION TIP:**

*There is no requirement to print the LEED Letter Templates on the company letterhead of the professional responsible. This requirement was removed as of CaGBC's October 2010 e-news for all LEED Canada rating systems and versions. Note that the signature of the professional responsible is still required on each declaration.*

## Submitting for Certification

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The certification review process is initiated by submitting the following to the CaGBC:

- 1) Project documentation, either on a CD, or uploaded to an FTP site of your choice. If using an FTP site, please send an email to [certifications@cagbc.org](mailto:certifications@cagbc.org) with a link to the FTP site for a one-click download.
- 2) The completed and printed Certification Fee Submittal Form, which is available from the CaGBC website. The form **must** be sent with the payment.

- 3) Payment for certification. Certification fees may be calculated using the Certification Fee Submittal Form. Cheques should be made payable to the Canada Green Building Council. Projects should ensure that the certification fee is based on the final project floor area as recorded on the Project Info page of the Excel LEED Letter Template. ***The Project Floor Area is the sum of the floor areas of the spaces within the building including basements, mezzanine and intermediate-floored tiers, and penthouses with headroom height of 7.5 ft (2.2 metres) or greater. It is measured from the exterior faces of exterior walls or from the centerline of walls separating buildings, but excluding covered walkways, open roofed-over areas, porches and similar spaces, pipe trenches, exterior terraces or steps, chimneys, roof overhangs, and similar features (ASHRAE 90.1 – 2007). The project floor area must match the area recorded on the project info page of the LEED Letter Templates.***

The documentation, Certification Fee Submittal Form and payment should be sent to:

Canada Green Building Council  
47 Clarence Street, Suite 202  
Ottawa ON K1N 9K1  
attn: Junior LEED Technical Coordinator

All submissions must be accompanied by the LEED project number (not the registration invoice number but the assigned project number as per the CaGBC website and the registration welcome letter). If the cheque is not provided at time of submission, please indicate when to expect the cheque.

For LEED Canada-NC v1.0, LEED Canada-CS v1.0 or LEED BC projects, if the energy simulation under EAp2/EAc1 was not reviewed by Natural Resources Canada or an independent third party reviewer (as per the submittal requirements), please ensure that the certification fee includes the CaGBC energy review fee and follow all documentation submittal requirements for this certification pathway. Please highlight to the CaGBC that the energy review is being requested when the submission is sent.

## Certification Timeline

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### ***DID YOU KNOW?***

*Certification Reviews are not to be considered precedents for future projects wishing to achieve LEED Canada certification. Only Credit Interpretation Requests can be considered precedents.*

The certification process for LEED Canada NC 2009, LEED Canada CS 2009, LEED Canada EB:O&M 2009 projects follows a two-stage review process. It is identical to the three-stage process used in the earlier rating systems and detailed below, except that there is no audit round. Credits are either marked *Credit Achievement Anticipated*, *Pending Clarification*, or *Denied* in the first review. The second review is the final review. This information has been summarized into a flow chart that includes timelines – it is available on the CaGBC web site. Note that the timelines

provided are for guidance only, and represent the minimum time required to process a well-prepared project submission for a less complex project. In addition, the CaGBC may experience delays due to workload.

The certification process for LEED Canada-NC 1.0, 1.0 plus addendum, LEED Canada-CS 1.0, LEED Canada-CI and LEED-BC projects follows a three-stage review process.

1. Initial Submission:

- When applicants provide their initial submission for certification, CaGBC staff perform a completeness check to ensure that all documentation is complete and there are no major issues that will prevent the review of the project. Applicants will be asked to clarify any outstanding issues. Applicants will be provided with a completeness check form.
- When the file is deemed complete, it is forwarded to a contracted certification review team (one of several), which performs a confidential review of the material and provides a draft of the first certification review report to the CaGBC.
- The CaGBC performs a quality assurance and consistency check on the file before releasing the first review to the applicant. In this review, credits are marked Credit Achievement Anticipated (CAA), Pending (either audited or pending additional information or clarification) or Denied. The first review identifies the 6 audited prerequisites or credits requiring audit level documentation to be submitted. Other prerequisites and credits may be marked pending if additional clarifications are required. Rationales are provided for the denied and pending credits.

2. Second submission (audit review)

- There is no specific timeframe for applicants to provide the second submission, however lengthy delays are not recommended as they may make it more difficult to find the information required. It also slows down the CaGBC's review of the second submission as the project is no longer familiar.
- Applicants must provide their documentation, in response to the first review, in electronic format, organized on a CD (or FTP site). This documentation must be sent to the CaGBC.
- CaGBC staff perform a completeness check of the material and request any clarifications. The material is then submitted to the same certification review team and the resulting second review report is returned to the CaGBC for quality assurance review.
- The second review is provided to the applicant requesting any outstanding clarifications. In the second review audited credits are marked CAA, Denied or Pending additional information. If an audited credit is denied or pending additional information (i.e., did not pass the audit), the review team may audit up to 6 additional credits that were previously marked CAA. Withdrawing an audited credit is the same as it being denied. The second review will also highlight any other outstanding clarifications required.

### 3. Final submission

- The third and final submission allows the applicant to respond to any outstanding requests for clarification from the second review.
- There is no specific timeframe for applicants to provide the material to the CaGBC. It may be provided on CD, by FTP site, or via email if the files are not substantial in size. If providing material through email, please send it directly to the assigned Junior LEED Technical Coordinator for the project.
- CaGBC staff perform a completeness check of the material and request any clarifications. The material is then submitted to the same certification review team and the resulting review report is returned to the CaGBC for quality assurance review.
- The final review report is provided to the applicant listing all achieved and denied credits and an unofficial final point score and rating. The applicant will be asked to review the report to ensure all wording is clear and understandable.
- At this stage the project is ready to move to the certification finalization stage.

#### ***DID YOU KNOW?***

*You can add additional credits, originally not attempted, to your submission on the second or third submission, or substitute alternative innovation strategies to achieve IDc1 (Innovation in Design). Please note however that there are fewer opportunities to clarify any concerns during the review process when adding or substituting credits in this manner.*

*For LEED Canada v1.0 projects, you MUST include all audit level documentation for any new credits being applied for in the second or third (final) submission, as these credits have missed the audit round. Where there is no audit documentation listed, please contact the CaGBC LEED Technical Coordinator assigned to the project in advance to discuss the appropriate documentation that is needed for adding/substituting a new credit on the second or third round.*

*For LEED Canada v2009 projects, please ensure that any additional credits are fully and carefully documented when applied for in the second (final) submission as there is no opportunity for further clarification after the second (final) submission. For credits where a data check may be necessary (e.g., Regional Materials), include the data check documentation.*

## **Finalization of the Certification**

Once the review process is completed, the applicant will be asked to provide contact information for the owner's representative to whom the final report should be sent. CaGBC staff will provide the owner with the following:

- Final LEED Canada Certification Review Report
- LEED Canada Acceptance of Rating Form
- LEED Canada Plaque Guidelines

The owner **must** return the acceptance form; the project is not certified until the owner provides the acceptance form and approves the final project name. The certification date will be the date when the project acceptance form is returned to the CaGBC.

Once the project is confirmed, the owner will be provided with an electronic LEED Canada Scorecard, a LEED Canada plaque and an official certificate. The plaque and certificate will arrive within 8 weeks. Additional copies of the certificate will be provided to the owner for secondary entrances and for distribution to the design team.

The LEED Canada project database will be updated with the certification. The owner's marketing contact will be asked to provide an updated project profile, print-quality digital photos, and a final listing of the organization involved in the project. These will be used on CaGBC's website and possibly for other uses such as presentations. Owners are strongly encouraged to provide this material in order to better highlight their success.

## **Certification Appeal Process**

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Applicants are welcome to appeal CaGBC's final ruling on denied Prerequisites and Credits by providing additional documentary evidence of performance of the applicable intent and requirements. The appeal package must be provided to the CaGBC within 25 business days following the receipt of the Final LEED Review by the project's LEED Consultant (main contact).

Applicants wishing to appeal should prepare an electronic letter or email that outlines their concern with the review and attach all relevant documents. This documentation should be emailed (or mailed on a CD) to the CaGBC Junior LEED Technical Coordinator assigned to the project, along with a cheque for the applicable fees.

The additional documentation will be reviewed by CaGBC staff and the review team. The appeal will be discussed by all Review Team Leaders. If denied, the appeal will be vetted by the LEED Canada Steering Committee and the Technical Advisory Groups, if required. Applicants will be issued an updated certification review report. This report, with its certification level, will be considered final and no further appeals of any prerequisites or credits will be allowed.

### **Cost of an Appeal:**

Appeals are charged at a rate of \$750 per credit/prerequisite (plus applicable taxes). Appeal fees are refundable if it is shown that the original ruling team made an inappropriate decision with the information that was provided to them.

Please make cheques payable to the **Canada Green Building Council** and mail them to:

Canada Green Building Council  
47 Clarence Street, Suite 202  
Ottawa ON K1N 9K1  
attn: Junior LEED Technical Coordinator

Note that for LEED Canada-NC v1.0 or LEED Canada-CS v1.0 projects, if the CaGBC performed the energy review for EAp2/EAc1 and the applicant is choosing to appeal this prerequisite/credit with a new simulation model, then the energy review fee must be paid in addition to the normal appeal fee.

**Prerequisites and Credits that can be appealed:**

- An appeal can be made on any denied Prerequisite or Credit. An appeal cannot be made on a credit not originally attempted during the review process, except for Green Power and Exemplary Performance for Green Power (IDc1 / IOc1).
- Any appeal of IDc1 (Innovation in Design) must be limited to the strategies already applied for during the certification review process.
- Exceptions will be considered on their merit. Please contact the project's Junior LEED Technical Coordinator for details.
- There is no limit to the number of denied prerequisites or credits that can be appealed on a project.