

## 4 Tips on LEED

### 1. How to Get the LEED-EBOM Water Efficiency Points

Today's tip is about understanding the water efficiency credits in the LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance rating system.

For many facility managers, water efficiency isn't much of a priority because water is perceived as abundant and cheap. But LEED-EBOM has been effective at getting folks to care, because it requires a 20 percent reduction in in-building water use to achieve any level of certification.

Additionally, LEED-EBOM offers 14 additional points for water efficient strategies, like metering, additional plumbing and fixture efficiency, water efficient landscaping, and cooling tower water management.

Two easy and relatively cheap ways many facility managers have attacked the water efficiency credits is with aerators and retrofit kits to transform existing single-flush plumbing fixtures to dual-flush. Aerators for faucets usually cost less than \$1 each, and can be installed easily by facility maintenance staff.

However facility managers decide to go about water efficiency measures, a critical step in the process is to communicate with occupants about what is happening. To many, the restroom is sacred, and so messing with any part of such a place of habit can have dire consequences in terms of negative occupant feedback. Just letting occupants know, for instance, that you've added aerators to the faucets can save all kinds of trouble calls about how there must be a problem with the pipes because the water isn't flowing as quickly as it used to.

### 2. Some Green Legal Issues to Be Aware Of

Today's tip is about green legal issues and how they could affect an owners' legal recourse if a building fails to perform as expect.

The key to any legal recourse is what is in the contract. Of course, this is nothing new. In fact, experts say really the only thing that's new about green building litigation is the idea of levels of certification vis-a-vis the LEED rating system. Breach of contract and negligence lawsuits with construction projects are relatively common.

The issue is that most designers and consultants, without a ton of restrictions and qualifications, will not guarantee a LEED certification or a particular level of energy performance. The reason is that designers don't control the entire process of LEED certification. And for energy, they'll say that the way the building is operated has as much to do with its energy efficiency as the design. Furthermore, several sources familiar with green building litigation practically laughed at the idea that an energy model would be useful in court as evidence of negligence or breach of contract for an underperforming building.

Owners should work with designers to spell out specifically in the contract which party in the design and construction process has responsibility for which tasks - including LEED credits. That way, if something goes wrong with the certification, owners can point to a particular instance of negligence or breach of contract, and have a much better chance in the courtroom.

### **3. How To Prepare Your Building For LEED-CI Tenants**

Today's tip is about how you can prepare a building for tenants who may be interested in certifying their space with the LEED for Commercial Interiors rating system. In today's ultracompetitive leasing environment, it's imperative that property managers do just about anything they can to give their buildings a competitive advantage. With more and more tenants interested in sustainability in general and LEED-CI certification in particular, a few tips to ease their certification goals can go along way.

For instance, make sure to conduct an inventory of building-level HVAC systems to determine if any still use CFC refrigerants. For tenants to achieve CI certification, they must be in a building whose HVAC uses only non-CFC refrigerants. It's a LEED-CI prerequisite. Another is compliance with ASHRAE 90.1-2007 for energy and ASHRAE 62.1 for ventilation for indoor air quality. If a tenant is interested in LEED-CI and your building doesn't meet that minimum energy and ventilation performance, there's a good chance they'll pass on to one that does.

Other strategies are simpler: Property managers should designate an area of the building for recycling collection and storage. This meets a Materials and Resources prerequisite. Another easy one - which is a no-brainer these days - is to prohibit smoking in a building and within 25 feet of entrances.

Finally, a good strategy is to put together a manual that familiarizes potential tenants with building-level systems, and shows them how they can implement LEED-based strategies in their space. This will help them along the path to certification.

### **4. Where Are The LEED-EBOM Points Available?**

Today's tip is about the points breakdown in the LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance rating system.

Without looking, do you know which category offers the second-most points after Energy and Atmosphere, which offers 35? You may be surprised to learn it's actually Sustainable Sites, with 26. That may seem odd to some facility managers, that there are so many points for site available for an existing building rating system. But a big chunk of the Sustainable Sites available points is to develop plans for alternative transportation for building occupants. Points are also available for cool roofing, stormwater control strategies and pest control.

The Indoor Environmental Quality section lands in third for points, with 15 available points. It also has three prerequisite, tied with Energy and Atmosphere for the most of any section. Water Efficiency is fourth with 14 available points, and Materials & Resources has 10 available points.

The last two categories include the Innovation in Operations section - where 6 points are available for exemplary performance in any of the other LEED credits or for creative sustainable strategies. Finally, four points are available for regional priority credits. This section was an addition to last year's LEED 2009 revamp.

In total, 100 points are available, and facility managers need 40 for the Certified level, 50 for Silver, 60 for Gold and 80 for Platinum.