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# Green Buildings, Safety First

Four new pilot credits in the LEED rating system include a focus on surface cleaning and indoor air quality.

By Anne Cosgrove

In June, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) released four new Safety First Pilot Credits to address the significant and expected long-term impact of COVID-19 in the buildings industry. The credits outline sustainable best practices that align with public health and industry guidelines related to cleaning and disinfecting, workplace re-occupancy, HVAC, and plumbing operations.

The Safety First credits were created in direct response to COVID-19 and focus on the safety of those working in a building. These credits are available to all LEED 2009, LEED v4 and LEED v4.1 projects. The credits can be used by LEED projects that are certified or are undergoing certification.

Here is an overview of the four Safety First Pilot Credits:

The **Safety First: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Space** credit requires facilities to create a policy and implement procedures that follow green cleaning best practices that support a healthy indoor environment and worker safety. Current disinfectants and cleaning processes are effective against the Coronavirus, and sustainable options exist. In addition to product considerations, the credit also requires procedures and training for cleaning personnel, occupant education, and other services that are within a management team's control. (See article on page 29 for more on this topic.)

The **Safety First: Re-Enter Your Workspace** credit is a tool to assess and plan for re-entry, as well as measure progress once a space is occupied. It identifies sustainable requirements in building operations and human behavior that take precautions against the spread of COVID-19. It aligns with the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Re-occupancy Assessment Tool and requires transparent reporting and evaluation of decisions to encourage continuous improvement.

The **Safety First: Building Water System Recommissioning** credit helps building teams reduce the risk that occupants are exposed to degraded water quality. Building and business





closures over weeks or months reduce water usage that can potentially lead to stagnant water and water that is unsafe to drink or use. The credit integrates recommendations from industry organizations

## LEED Project Spotlight

In 1960, TCF Center (seen here at left) in Detroit, MI opened as Cobo Hall. It was the largest convention center in the United States. Its most recent renovation in 2015 included significant upgrades in energy HVAC saving equipment, water saving fixtures, and a living green roof. Ongoing improvements span the entire facility, and in October 2019 the 2.4 million square foot facility became the largest LEED certified facility in the state of Michigan. The facility earned LEED Gold certification. **To learn more, visit [www.tcfcenterdetroit.com/green](http://www.tcfcenterdetroit.com/green)**

and experts, including the U.S. EPA and CDC. It requires buildings to develop and implement a water management plan, coordinate with local water and public health authorities, communicate water system activities and associated risks to building occupants, and take steps to address water quality from the community supply, as well as the building.

The **Safety First: Managing Indoor Air Quality During COVID-19** credit builds on existing indoor air quality requirements and credits in LEED. Building teams should ensure indoor air quality systems are operating as designed and determine temporary adjustments to ventilation that may minimize the spread of COVID-19 through the air. Additional considerations include increasing ventilation and air filtration, physical distancing of occupants, and following measures outlined in public health and industry resources, as well as guidance found in the Re-Enter Your Workspace

credit. The guidance also encourages monitoring and evaluating indoor air quality on an ongoing basis.

These credits are based on current, known information, and USGBC will refine its recommendations over time.

In addition to these new LEED pilot credits, projects can also take advantage of Arc Re-entry, a set of resources launched in June to help facility teams assess and communicate recovery efforts, as well as the WELL Health-Safety Rating. (GBCI will be providing third party certification support for the WELL Health-Safety Rating, and read more about this rating in the article on page 24.) ■



Cosgrove is Editor-in-Chief of Facility Executive.

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