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## **Do You Want To Become A LEED AP?**

If you are considering taking the LEED AP test, there are some big changes that you need to understand. The Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI) is now administering the US Green Building Council's (USGBC) credentialing programs and they have announced major changes to the LEED AP program. There are now three categories of credentialing and prerequisite requirements you must meet before taking the test. It is set up in a phased approach, depending upon your level of involvement. The USGBC has identified the LEED AP as the technical expert that will go through or guide someone through the certification process. They recognize that the 65,000+ people that are currently LEED APs are not all people who work directly with the rating system and certification. There are a lot of product manufacturers who want to show their understanding of the rating system, but are not the technical experts going through certification. The three tiers are described below.

### **Tier I: LEED Green Associates**

This is a new designation and is intended for people who support the LEED rating system although they may not be directly involved with a certification project. The exam for this new designation will reportedly cover basic green building knowledge and will not be rating system specific. The target group for this is manufacturers, marketing/administrative people, students, educators, etc.

Candidates must:

1. Agree to disciplinary policy and credential maintenance guidelines.
2. Demonstrate or document involvement in support of LEED projects.
3. Be employed in a sustainable field of work or engaged in an education program in green building principals and LEED.

### **Tier II: Specialized Credential System: The LEED Accredited Professional**

This tier is for practicing individuals and demonstrates competence in each of the specific rating systems. Under the old credentialing program, once you passed the exam, you were a LEED AP. It did not matter which test you took and in which area you practiced. Now, when you take the exam that aligns within the area you work in --- your LEED AP is then area specific. Here are the categories identified for LEED AP's:

- LEED AP ID+C (LEED for Commercial Interiors)
- LEED AP Homes (LEED for Homes)
- LEED AP O+M (LEED for Existing Buildings)
- LEED AP ND (Neighborhood Development)
- LEED AP BD+C: (LEED for New Construction)

Candidates must:

1. Agree to disciplinary policy and credential maintenance guidelines.
2. Demonstrate professional experience on at least one LEED project.
3. Document work on a LEED project, within the last two-three years, with verification through LEED Online or employer attestation.

Tier III: LEED AP Fellow - Demonstrates significant contribution to the industry and profession. This one is brand new and there aren't many details yet as to criteria, application, etc.

Anyone who is already a LEED AP will now be identified as a "Legacy LEED AP". If desired, Legacy LEED APs can take the area specific LEED AP exam again for a discipline specific designation. Otherwise, starting in June of this year through June 2011, to retain active status of their Legacy LEED AP, all LEED APs must agree to the GBCI/USGBC code of ethics and credential maintenance guidelines.

How will this affect the FM industry? Well, if you are a practicing FM and your building is not pursuing LEED certification, you will not be able to meet the experience prerequisite and therefore, you are not eligible to become a LEED AP. You are, however eligible to become a LEED Green Associate. If we go back to the idea that the LEED AP is the technical expert on the rating system and the LEED Green Associate is someone who understands and is competent in LEED and sustainability in general, this may not be such a bad fit for FMs. If you are concerned that you do not fit into the new LEED AP credentialing program, don't be. The FMs and the existing building market have the greatest potential to impact the environment in so many ways: Water Conservation, Energy Conservation, Waste Reduction, etc. With or without a credential from the USGBC, the practicing FMs are transforming the way we operate buildings.

## **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

Resources:

[www.gbci.org](http://www.gbci.org)

[www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)