



## **Green Guide for Health Care™**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

8/09/07

#### **1. What is the *Green Guide for Health Care™*?**

The *Green Guide* is the health care sector's first quantifiable sustainable design toolkit integrating enhanced environmental and health principles and practices into the planning, design, construction, operations and maintenance of their facilities. This *Guide* provides the health care sector with a voluntary, self-certifying metric toolkit of best practices that designers, owners, and operators can use to guide and evaluate their progress towards high performance healing environments.

The *Green Guide* is divided into a *Construction* section and an *Operations* section. The *Construction* section is relevant for new construction, renovations, and additions. Existing facilities are encouraged to track their ongoing performance using the *Operations* section, while making a commitment to utilize the *Construction* section on future projects. Construction projects are encouraged to identify the *Operations*-related credits that they intend to achieve and establish commitments to these O&M goals through policy setting. Note that construction projects are unable to attain all of the points in the *Operations* section, as some credits require a year's worth of data to achieve credit goals.

#### **2. What building types are appropriate to use the *Green Guide for Health Care™*?**

While an array of building types is represented in the health care sector, the *Green Guide for Health Care* is specifically customized for buildings that are predominately institutional occupancies as defined by the local building code, such as acute care hospitals, where regulatory requirements have created particular needs. Medical office buildings, clinics and other buildings where health care concerns are dominant can also use the *Green Guide*. Recognizing the full-range of construction, operations and maintenance activities associated with the health care sector, the *Green Guide* applies to new freestanding facilities, additions to existing facilities coupled with renovation, extensive rehabilitation/adaptive reuse projects, and existing facilities for which the *Operations* section can be used as a standalone best practices guide. Additionally, non-health care facilities are encouraged to take advantage of the *Green Guide* credits' emphasis on health-based considerations.

#### **3. What is the difference between the *Green Guide for Health Care™* and the upcoming LEED® for Health Care tool?**

There is a history of collaboration between the *Green Guide* and the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C., that develops and administers the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) rating system. LEED® and the *Green Guide* may be distinguished from each other through their mode of administration. LEED® is a third-party certification rating tool, while the *Green Guide* is a voluntary, self-certifying tool. In its development, the *Green Guide* drew from LEED® as a foundational document, with permission from the USGBC, along with other reference documents. Some credits in the *Green Guide* are identical to LEED for New Construction and LEED for Existing Buildings; some credits have been modified to better suit the unique requirements of health care facilities; and, some credits are new. The differences and similarities between the specific credits in the *Green Guide* and LEED are outlined in a series of tables at the end of the *Green Guide* Introduction. Similarly, the LEED for Health Care core committee is using the *Green Guide for Health Care* as a foundational document in its

development. However, it is important to note that the *Green Guide for Health Care* is not a USGBC document. Many *Green Guide* registered projects are using both LEED and the *Green Guide*, with many finding that credits new to the *Green Guide* may be used as potential Innovation credits for their LEED® certification.

#### **4. What is the relationship between the *Green Guide for Health Care*™ and the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)?**

The U.S. Green Building Council Board of Directors has approved a partnership, in principle, between the USGBC and GGHC, with a formal agreement pending. Since its inception in 2003, GGHC and the USGBC have worked in close collaboration. A representative from the USGBC sits on the *Green Guide*'s Steering Committee. In its development, the *Green Guide* drew from LEED® as a foundational document, with permission from the USGBC, along with other reference documents. Similarly, the LEED for Health Care tool (currently under development) is using the *Green Guide for Health Care* as a foundational document in its development. In addition, the chairs and many members of the *Green Guide* Steering Committee also serve as chair and members of the LEED for Health Care core committee.

#### **5. How can I register on the *Green Guide for Health Care*™ website?**

Registration on the *Green Guide for Health Care* website is free. Website registrants have access to a free download of the *Green Guide for Health Care* toolkit, an Introductory PowerPoint presentation, monthly newsletters, and the *Green Guide* Events web page. To register on the *Green Guide for Health Care* website: (1) Go to [www.gghc.org](http://www.gghc.org); (2) Click on "Login"; (3) Click on "If you have not previously registered yourself on this site, Click here"; (4) Fill out the brief questionnaire and create a password. Your email address will function as your user identification.

#### **6. How can I support the *Green Guide*'s work?**

You can get involved in several ways:

- Participate in *Green Guide* educational outreach: read our monthly newsletter; participate in the monthly GGHC/H2E green building teleconference series; attend a *Green Guide* training in your area.
- Sign up one or more of your projects as a *Green Guide* Version 2.2 registered project.
- Support the *Green Guide* either financially (as a Sponsor or Partner) or as an Endorser, a level of support that does not imply a financial contribution. (Note that manufacturers are only eligible to support at the Endorser level.)

Visit <http://www.gghc.org/supportgghc.cfm> for more information about how to support the *Green Guide*. All donations to the *Green Guide for Health Care* are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

#### **7. How can I learn more about the *Green Guide for Health Care*™?**

- Download the *Green Guide for Health Care* Version 2.2 document from the [www.gghc.org](http://www.gghc.org) website for free, or purchase a hard copy of *Green Guide* Version 2.2 from our online store.
- Sign up for the monthly *Green Guide* newsletters by registering on the [www.gghc.org](http://www.gghc.org) website.
- Participate in the GGHC/H2E green building teleconference series. Registration is available on the Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) website: [www.h2e-online.org](http://www.h2e-online.org).
- Attend a *Green Guide* workshop or panel listed on the "Events" section of the [www.gghc.org](http://www.gghc.org) website.

#### **8. Where can I find the *Green Guide for Health Care*™ document?**

The *Green Guide* Version 2.2 is available for purchase on the *Green Guide*'s online store and as a free PDF download on the [www.gghc.org](http://www.gghc.org) website. To purchase or download the *Green Guide*: (1)

Log in to [www.gghc.org](http://www.gghc.org); (2) Click on the “Downloads” button; (3) Either click on the link to the GGHC Online Store or download the PDF document on the Downloads webpage by left clicking on the file name. The *Green Guide* PDF is available both in its entirety and separated into parts: Introduction, *Construction* section, and *Operations* section.

**9. What is the difference between Version 2.1 and Version 2.2 of the *Green Guide for Health Care™*?**

*Green Guide* Version 2.2 boasts a substantially revised *Construction* Section and several clarifying changes to the *Operations* section. The most significant revisions respond to feedback from *Green Guide* Pilot projects and, where appropriate, align with LEED for New Construction Version 2.2. Added to *Green Guide* Version 2.2 *Construction* section are one mandatory Prerequisite (now 12 total prerequisites) and one voluntary Credit (now 97 total credits). These changes, along with consolidation of several existing credits, has resulted in a slight shift of credit weighting across sections. For a credit-by-credit comparison of *Green Guide* Version 2.2 and *Green Guide* Version 2.1 Pilot, log in to the *Green Guide* website ([www.gghc.org](http://www.gghc.org)) and visit the “Downloads” page ([www.gghc.org/download/mgdocs.cfm](http://www.gghc.org/download/mgdocs.cfm)) to download the credit comparison chart: GGHC-2-2-Compare\_to\_v2-1.pdf.

**10. What is the difference between a self-certifying, best practices system and a third-party certified rating system?**

A self-certifying system does not require program participants to provide documentation demonstrating that the project has complied with the program’s requirements. Self-certifying tools are used as an internal guideline for continuous improvement and best practices. A third-party certification program, such as the USGBC’s LEED® Rating System, requires project teams to submit documentation to a third party certifying body (the USGBC, in this case) in order to verify compliance with a set of guidelines.

**11. Has the *Green Guide* established minimum point thresholds?**

The *Green Guide for Health Care* is a self-certifying, best practices toolkit; as such, it does not provide achievement level threshold rankings. The point system provides design and construction teams with a way to baseline and benchmark their achievement and to support continuous improvement.

**12. Am I required to use both the *Construction* and *Operations* sections of the *Green Guide* at the same time?**

No. Existing facilities are encouraged to track their ongoing performance using the *Operations* section, while making a commitment to utilize the *Construction* section on future projects. Construction projects are encouraged to identify the *Operations*-related credits that they intend to achieve and establish commitments to these O&M goals through policy setting. Note that construction projects are unable to attain all of the points in the *Operations* section, as some credits require a year’s worth of data to achieve credit goals.

**13. How can I sign up a project as a *Green Guide for Health Care™* Version 2.2 registered project?**

Design and facility management teams in any stage of design, construction or operation are invited to register their projects with the *Green Guide*. To register a project as a *Green Guide* Version 2.2 project (a free process): (1) Log in to the [www.gghc.org](http://www.gghc.org) website; (2) Click on the “Register a Project” button and follow the subsequent instructions. After registering the project, you can return to the project’s account information and credit checklists by: (1) logging into the website, (2) clicking the “View/Manage a Project” button, and (3) clicking on the project name.

**14. What are the benefits of *Green Guide* Version 2.2 project registration?**

*Green Guide* Version 2.2 registered projects have access to a variety of online project management tools. The project manager can invite up to thirteen additional project team members to join the project. Project team members have read-only access to the project information, including credit checklists for both the *Construction* and *Operations* sections and access to the *Green Guide* Forum. Only the project manager(s) have administrative access to the project information. To change, add, or delete project managers from a project, contact *Green Guide* Project Manager Adele Houghton at [info@gghc.org](mailto:info@gghc.org). See number 17 below for a description of the *Green Guide* Forum.

**15. What are the minimum requirements for a *Green Guide* Version 2.2 registered project?**

*Green Guide* Version 2.2 registered projects are required to fulfill all of the prerequisites in order to participate in the program. Registered projects are not required to participate in both the *Construction* and *Operations* sections of the *Green Guide* simultaneously. While the *Green Guide* does not designate credit thresholds, registered projects are encouraged to complete as many voluntary credits as possible.

**16. Who should be included on my *Green Guide for Health Care*™ Version 2.2 project team?**

A total of 14 members of the project team may associate with the project. Project team members should include, at a minimum, representatives from the owner, architect, MEP engineers, and contractor. Project team members have read-only access to the project information, including credit checklists for both the *Construction* and *Operations* sections and access to the *Green Guide* Forum. Only the project manager(s) have administrative access to the project information. To change, add, or delete project managers from a project, contact *Green Guide* Project Manager Adele Houghton at [info@gghc.org](mailto:info@gghc.org).

**17. How can I invite project team members to associate with a *Green Guide* registered project?**

Each *Green Guide* project is governed by a “Project Team Administrator”. The project team administrator can invite up to 13 additional members of the project team to associate with the project: (1) Log in to the [www.gghc.org](http://www.gghc.org) website; (2) Click on the “View/Manage Project” button; (3) Click on the name of the project; (4) Click on the “Manage Project Team” link under “Manage Project Information”; (5) Type in the First Name, Last Name, and email address of each invitee; (6) Remind project team members to register on the *Green Guide* website before attempting to associate with the project.

**18. How can I accept an invitation to associate with a *Green Guide* registered project?**

Each *Green Guide* project is governed by a “Project Team Administrator”. If the project team administrator invites you to associate with a project, you will receive an email from the project administrator containing the project identification code. (1) Log in to the [www.gghc.org](http://www.gghc.org) website; (2) Click on the “Accept Invitation” button; (3) Type the project identification code in the text box and click “Find Project”; (4) If the correct project name appears on the next screen, click “Continue with Project Association” to complete the project association. Contact [info@gghc.org](mailto:info@gghc.org) if you encounter any difficulties during the registration process.

**19. What is the *Green Guide for Health Care*™ Forum?**

*Green Guide* registered project teams have access to the “Forum,” a dedicated web-based discussion where project team members can engage in peer-to-peer interchanges with other teams to discuss issues that arise and exchange ideas as they pursue achievement of credits in the *Guide*. Forum discussions are organized by *Green Guide* credit. While the *Green Guide* Steering Committee and staff are unable to offer consultation on individual projects, the peer-to-peer discussions in this Forum provide valuable support and ideas to participants. These discussions will also provide important experiential data to the *Green Guide* Steering Committee and inform subsequent refinements to the *Green Guide* document.