



LEED & Arc FAQ

Navigating COVID-19 re-entry

March 2022

LEED and Arc are changing – offering more flexibility, more insights, and new pilot credits that recognize the changes needed to facilitate building re-entry following the COVID-19 pandemic. With the latest allowances and guidance, there is a path to certification for every project.

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Submittals and payments

Can I pay my LEED project’s certification fees by electronic bank transfer?

Yes, please contact [LEED Coach Canada](#) and we’ll provide instructions for setting up your company to make payments by electronic bank transfer rather than by cheque.

We can’t provide our review resubmittal on time due to COVID-19. Can we get an extension?

Contact [LEED Coach Canada](#), sharing your project number and circumstance, and we will be glad to help.



We can't submit our LEED O+M project for review on time due to COVID-19. Can we get an extension?

There are many options for LEED O+M project teams who are unable to complete activities and actions on-time due to COVID-19. The latest allowances, which include using a reporting period that pre-dates any occupancy reductions due to COVID-19, ensure that there is a certification path for all O+M projects. Details about the options available can be found in this [Guidance document](#). Projects may also request an extension. If you have any questions about the certification allowances, contact [LEED Coach Canada](#).

Cleaning and disinfection

I have updated my cleaning strategies in response to COVID-19. Will this impact my certification?

Every project should feel confident in taking measures to provide a safe and healthy environment. If the project team is required to purchase products that do not meet the criteria of EQc Green Cleaning due to current concerns about COVID-19, please contact [LEED Coach Canada](#) with a narrative explaining the circumstances.

Can you clarify the differences in disinfection protocols for EQc Green Cleaning and the Safety First Pilot Credit: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Space?

One of the key elements of any workplace re-entry plan is disinfection protocols. There is a difference in disinfection protocols between these two credits. For the EQc Green Cleaning credit, use products that are UL 2794 certified. For the pilot credit, use any product that is approved by [Health Canada](#) as effective against COVID-19 and uses active ingredients from the EPA's [Design for the Environment](#) program.

Guidance documents for LEED v4.1 O+M and Recertification projects

I am concerned that the change in occupancy for my building will impact performance reporting for my LEED O+M project. What should I do?

We understand that significantly reduced (or increased) occupancy will impact building data and scores. The guidance will enable you to find a path forward for your project. Be sure to watch the highlights of our interactive webinar [“New COVID guidance for your LEED O+M Project”](#).

Guidance is available for projects pursuing LEED O+M initial certification or recertification and impacted by COVID-19. In general, there are two pathways forward for project teams; Option 1. Use pre-COVID-19 performance data (LEED O+M v4.1 initial or recertification in either LEED Online or the Arc platform and LEED O+M v4 recertification in the Arc platform), Option 2. Implement outlined pathways which account for reduced occupancy during COVID-19 (LEED v4.1 initial or recertification only).

[Download the guidance document.](#)

This guidance is applicable to LEED O+M projects submitting prior to **JUNE 30, 2022**. In case any of this guidance does not work for a specific project need, please contact [LEED Coach Canada](#).

How do I navigate LEED Online and Arc when submitting a LEED v4.1 O+M project pursuing COVID pathway Option 2?

For project teams pursuing the alternative pathways, step-by-step instructions for data entry processes are outlined in the [LEED v4.1 O+M Certification and Recertification COVID-19 Submittal Guidance Document](#).

Watch the highlights of our interactive webinar [“New COVID guidance for your LEED O+M Project”](#).

How do I calculate a time-weighted average based on occupancy throughout a reporting period for my LEED v4.1 O+M project?

Select the setting “Impacted by COVID-19” in project settings under meters and surveys > settings > more settings if not already selected. The system will calculate time-weighted occupancy based on the occupancy values provided. Time-weighted occupancy values are calculated as follows.

Update the building’s occupancy to reflect occupancy changes throughout the 365-day reporting period. The time-weighted occupancy option will smooth over short-term disruptions and reflect annual average occupancy.

My project is completing annual reporting and will be submitting for certification after June 30, 2021. What is the minimum requirement for maintaining annual reporting in Arc?

The minimum requirement for completing annual reporting is to maintain energy and water data in Arc. Surveys and audits should be completed as much as possible; however, where it was not feasible to complete surveys, audits or testing due to COVID-19, project teams may submit a narrative explaining why data is incomplete.

Guidance for LEED BD+C rating systems

Our LEED Canada project’s construction site was shut down by provincial order due to COVID-19. We are concerned we will not complete construction and submit on time to meet the LEED Canada sunset deadline of October 31, 2022. Can we get an extension?

Contact [LEED Coach Canada](#) if you have concerns your project will be unable to meet the submittal deadline; please share your project number and the circumstances your project has faced.

My construction waste recycling facility is closed or is not recycling materials at the same rate as before due to COVID-19. I am not able to store materials to wait for better recycling conditions. What can I do?

We encourage all projects to continue to divert materials and recycle to the greatest extent



possible. Those materials that are able to be recycled and diverted shall be documented in the normal way as outlined in the Materials and Resources Construction and Demolition Waste Management credit. However, we realize that circumstances may make recycling challenging for reasons outside a project team's control during the global pandemic.

Projects experiencing difficulty during this time shall continue to send materials to recycling facilities and either: (a) temporarily exclude the affected loads from credit calculations (still track the materials, even though they will not count toward overall project generation and diversion rates), or (b) use the waste processing facility's average diversion rate reported prior to the pandemic. Diversion rates must be the facility average for at least the six months prior to the pandemic.

Contact [LEED Coach Canada](#) with a narrative explaining the circumstances, as well as your preferred approach, and our LEED reviewers will help you understand how to document the approach in your LEED certification.

Pilot credits for safe re-entry

New [LEED pilot credits](#) outline sustainable best practices that align with public health and industry guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting, workplace re-occupancy, HVAC and plumbing operations. The credits can be used by LEED projects that are registered or are undergoing certification. Where the pilot credits are available to BD+C or ID+C projects, teams must demonstrate they were able to fully implement the requirements. For example, where a BD+C or ID+C project has completed construction and fit-out and the space is occupiable so that all measures in the pilot credits can be implemented, the pilot credits are available to the project. The credits are based on current, known information and will be refined over time – please share your [feedback](#).

What are Pilot Credits?

Pilot Credits facilitate the introduction of new credits to LEED. They allow for testing of new concepts and encourage continuous feedback from users. As a pilot, they are often subject to change. LEED v4 and v4.1 project teams must register to use a pilot credit through the pilot credit library; this locks in a version for a project, though teams are always welcome to use later versions. [LEED Canada 2009 projects may use the pilot credits](#) where applicable, following the guidance of CIR 1312; registration is not required.

- 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. Although vaccines and medical treatments are still in development for treating COVID-19, effective disinfecting products and processes already exist. In addition to product considerations, the credit also requires procedures and training for cleaning personnel, occupant education and other services that are within the management team's control. This credit is available for BD+C, ID+C and O+M under [LEED 2009](#), [LEED v4](#) and [LEED v4.1](#).

- The [Safety First: Re-enter Your Workspace](#) credit is a tool to assess and plan for re-entry as well as to measure progress once the space is occupied. It identifies sustainable requirements in building operations and human behavior that provide precautions against the spread of COVID-19. The credit aligns with the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Re-occupancy Assessment Tool and requires transparent reporting and evaluation of decisions to encourage continuous improvement. This credit is available for BD+C, ID+C and O+M under [LEED 2009](#), [LEED v4](#) and [LEED v4.1](#).
- 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, which can potentially lead to stagnant water or water that is unsafe to drink or use. The credit integrates recommendations from industry organizations and experts, including the U.S. EPA and the Centers for Disease Control. 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. This credit is available for BD+C and O+M under [LEED 2009](#), [LEED v4](#) and [LEED v4.1](#).
- 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. The guidance also encourages monitoring and evaluation of indoor air quality on an ongoing basis. CaGBC reminds teams they must apply sound judgement to determine the most appropriate recommendations for the specific building, location, and season. Teams should also ensure appropriate subject matter expertise is sought. For example, the determination of appropriate humidity levels would benefit from the expertise of a building envelope specialist. This credit is available for O+M projects under [LEED 2009](#), [LEED v4](#) and [LEED v4.1](#).
- The [Safety First: Arc Re-Entry credit](#) is a tool to track and document the facility's infection control processes to manage the risk of infectious disease transmission of COVID-19. The Arc Re-Entry tool helps project teams use an integrated process to align infection control policies and procedures with guidance from relevant public health authorities, collect and manage occupant feedback, and measure indoor air quality. The tool generates an Arc Re-Entry Report and a comprehensive score, while also establishing a process for continuous improvement and ongoing data maintenance. Project teams that register for the Arc Re-Entry Pilot Credit will receive 1 free 30-day trial subscription to [Arc Essentials](#). This credit is available for LEED v4 O+M and LEED v4.1 O+M projects.

- The [Safety First: Design for Indoor Air Quality and Infection Control](#) credit promotes consideration of the prevention of airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2 through the air and/or other airborne diseases during the HVAC system design. Specific attention is given to ventilation and filtration. This credit is available for [LEED 2009](#), [LEED v4](#) and [LEED v4.1](#).
- The [Safety First: Maintenance of HVAC Systems During COVID-19](#) credit was designed to maintain the well-being of occupants by addressing indoor air quality issues that may influence the spread of the coronavirus. This credit supports the ongoing inspection and maintenance of commercial HVAC systems based on guidance in ASHRAE Standard 180 or Table 8.2 of ASHRAE 62.1-2016 or equivalent. Guidance also addresses providing personal protective equipment (PPE) for building operators and maintenance technicians as appropriate.

Pilot credits for TRUE and SITES

A new [pilot credit for TRUE](#) focuses on eliminating adverse health impacts on personnel with regards to hazardous and non-hazardous solid waste management. It encourages the adoption of more stringent health and safety measures, such as the use and proper disposal of Personal Protective Equipment, as well as risk management and mitigation training for employees working with solid waste.

A new [pilot credit for SITES](#) encourages projects to undertake a risk assessment using the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Risk Assessment Tool, as well as create an updated operations and management plan.

Arc Re-Entry

Facility managers can use the [Arc Re-Entry tool](#) to add data and generate a Comprehensiveness Score ("Comp Score") for their building or portfolio. The Comp Score provides a comparable measure of the breadth and documentation of facility management policies, occupant experience and measured indoor air quality. Additional information about the Arc Re-Entry tool and the Comp Score can be found in the [Guide to Arc Re-Entry](#).

The [Arc Re-Entry](#) tools can be used:

- To document and benchmark infection-control policies and procedures
- To collect and analyze related occupant experiences
- To measure and track indoor air quality
- To achieve the LEED Safety First: Arc Re-Entry pilot credit
- As a stepping stone for the LEED Safety First pilot credits and [WELL Health-Safety rating](#)

Industry COVID-19 resources

The industry remains proactive in developing resources to help businesses and building operators prepare for a return to work.

Along with guidance from relevant local and provincial authorities, these Canadian-specific resources and best practices will help ease workplace re-entry.

Construction Related

- [Canadian Construction Association](#). Some notable resources include:
 - COVID-19 Standardized Protocols for All Canadian Construction Sites
 - Post COVID Contingency Planning
 - Links to resources offered by provincial construction associations
- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#): Coronavirus (COVID-19) Tips - Construction

Operations

- General
 - [National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health: Building Shutdown and Re-opening during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
 - [Building Owners and Managers Association \(BOMA\) Canada: Pathway Back to Work](#)
 - [Building Owners and Managers Association \(BOMA\) Canada: Pandemic Guide](#)
 - [Government of Canada Guidebook for departments on easing of restrictions](#)
- Water
 - [Canadian Water and Wastewater Association](#): Safely Re-opening Buildings: A Factsheet for Building Owners/Operators
- Green Cleaning
 - [Government of Canada: Hard-surface Disinfectants and Hand Sanitizers \(COVID-19\): List of Disinfectants with Evidence for Use Against COVID-19](#)
 - To find an environmentally preferable disinfectant that qualifies for the [Safety First: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Space](#) pilot credit, sort the list by active ingredient and look for products that have active ingredients meeting the [EPA's DfE label](#), such as citric acid, hydrogen peroxide and isopropanol.
- HVAC
 - [ASHRAE](#): Position Document on Infectious Aerosols
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Looking for more resources?

[Visit USGBC's COVID-19 resources page.](#)

[Visit REALPAC's Coronavirus / COVID-19 Resources page](#)

