Applying LEED to warehouse and distribution center projects

June 2025

Why use LEED on warehouses and distribution centers?

In addition to the benefits that are seen across all sectors (such as building and operating a resource-efficient, healthy building and the value of obtaining rigorous third-party certification) warehouse and distribution centers are experiencing increasing demand to deliver LEED certified projects to fulfill ESG goals, keep up with market competition and to demonstrate commitment to environmental sustainability.

How many warehouse and distribution center projects are registered and certified under LEED?

As of June 2025, there are 7,868 LEED-certified and registered warehouse and distribution center projects representing approximately 2.7B square feet (256M square meters) of built space. This includes projects certified through the one-off process and those certified through multiple building applications such as campus and volume. The numbers do not include industrial manufacturing projects. See the LEED for manufacturing projects help content to learn more about these facility types.

What is the LEED volume program and how can warehouse and distribution center projects benefit from the offering?

For organizations planning to certify several new construction projects, LEED volume certification can simplify LEED documentation and speed up the review process for those portfolios where uniformity and standardization of the LEED requirements are built into the project delivery process. Using this option streamlines LEED certifications by focusing on similarities in building design and construction practices – no matter where the projects are located. For organizations that certify multiple buildings within a given timeframe, this option offers valuable economies of scale for new construction buildings and commercial interior spaces. Learn more.

How do multiple buildings and structures in a campus setting earn LEED certification?

Warehouse and distribution center projects commonly operate with multiple buildings spread across a single site under the control of a single entity. To address this, the LEED Campus Guidance was developed. Its application to LEED projects represents the complexity and commonality of buildings and infrastructure on a shared site. LEED Campus Guidance is a useful tool for campuses with multiple buildings, common utilities, and campus-wide management policies. By utilizing LEED Campus Guidance, project teams can benefit from an increase in streamlined document development and review process, leading to successful implementation of LEED projects.

How does LEED address the unique challenges of warehouse and distribution projects? LEED v5 is the most current version of the rating system and is available for all commercial projects pursuing certification under New Construction, Core and Shell, Commercial Interiors and Existing Buildings. Many of the strategies developed for warehouse and distribution projects under previous versions of

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LEED, have been adapted for LEED v5 or can be found in the new Project Priorities and Innovation credit category. Credits in this category offer greater flexibility to address unique project contexts and priorities, including typology, culture, location, areas of innovation and individual performance objectives. Sector specific Project Priority credits are continuously being developed and will be released in the Project Priority Library for use.

How does the Arc platform relate to warehouse projects?

The LEED v4.1 O+M rating system offers a unique performance-based pathway to certify your existing buildings and interior spaces that uses Arc, a state-of-the-art platform designed to collect, manage and benchmark your building across five performance categories: energy, water, waste, transportation, and human experience.

LEED v4.1 O+M can be used to compare projects to other similar facilities pursuing high-performance measures from around the world. Portfolio managers and other stakeholders can continuously monitor the data and make informed decisions to optimize the building performance based on real-time data and analytics. This performance pathway can then be used to certify and recertify the project every 3 years. Learn more

LEED v5 BD+C, ID+C and O+M rating systems allow for all space types to certify utilizing the new Arc experience, which offers fluidity and flexibility for users. All performance, certification and reporting will be delivered in one place.

What are issues unique to warehouse and distribution center projects?

Many new build projects are speculative and do not have tenants contracted to occupy space. When tenant spaces are not under contract, the project may only be able to account for design and construction activities under the control of the owner and will not have details related to future tenant build-outs. In this case, LEED v4.1 BD+C presents more options as credit weightings are shifted to include more points that fall within the owner's control.

Some warehouse and distribution center O+M projects can face challenges with process loads (energy, water, and waste) that can impact performance scores to the point that prerequisites may not be met. If this is the case, please contact us.

What LEED resources are available for warehouse and distribution center project teams?

There are a variety of technical resources and educational courses available to help these teams apply LEED to their projects. This includes but is not limited to the following:

LEED rating systems for W&D projects

- LEED v4.1 BD+C: Warehouse and Distribution Centers
- LEED v4.1 O+M: Existing Buildings

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Articles and Briefs

- LEED Warehouse and Distribution Center Projects Balance Size and Efficiency
- ProLogis: Using green financing to work toward ESG goals
- LEED Volume for Industrial Developers

Project Profiles

- Tlalnepark IV Nave 2 – 1st LEED v5 O+M Industrial Warehouse & Distribution certified project in the world
- Casei Gerola Logistics Park
- United Therapeutics' Project Lightyear
- FM Logistic Hanoi Stage 1
- MAGNIT Distribution Center Krasnodar

One can view additional non confidential LEED warehouse and distribution center projects in the USGBC Project Directory by searching for the keywords 'warehouse' or 'industrial' in the search bar or by the W&D rating systems.

Does USGBC offer any education for project teams wanting to learn more about warehouse and distribution centers pursuing green building?

Yes! Check out the following sessions in the USGBC online course catalog:

- A LEED rating system for every project
- Toyota's Trigeneration Renewable Energy Project
- Think Small: Cargo Bikes in Toronto
- Achieving Sustainability in Warehouses, Distribution Centers & Data Centers
- LEED Strategies & Case Studies: Warehouse & Distribution

Who can I contact for more information?

For more information about LEED and how it applies to warehouse and distribution centers, contact us.