Applying LEED to warehouse and distribution center projects

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In addition to the benefits seen across all sectors—such as designing and operating resource-efficient, healthy buildings, and gaining the value of rigorous third-party certification—warehouses and distribution centers are experiencing increasing demand for LEED certification to fulfill ESG goals, remain competitive in the market, and demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability.

How can warehouses and distribution centers earn LEED certification?

Warehouses and distribution centers can be certified under different LEED rating systems at various stages of the building's lifecycle.

- **LEED for Building Design and Construction (BD+C)**: Warehouse and Distribution Centers is the most appropriate rating type for buildings that are new construction or major renovation. At least 60% of the project's gross floor area must be complete by the time of certification (except for LEED BD+C: Core and Shell) and must include the entire building's gross floor area in the project. This rating system is designed for facilities used to store goods, manufactured products, merchandise, raw materials, or personal belongings, like self-storage.
- **LEED for Operations and Maintenance (O+M)**: Warehouse and Distribution Center (v4) or Existing Buildings (v4.1) can be applied to existing buildings used to store goods, manufactured products, merchandise, raw materials, or personal belongings, like self-storage. Buildings must be fully operational and occupied for at least one year. The project may be undergoing improvement work or little to no construction and must include the entire building's gross floor area in the project

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

As of June 2026, there are 8,648 LEED-certified and registered warehouse and distribution center projects representing approximately 3.06 billion square feet (284 million 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 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 buildouts. In this case, LEED BD+C: Core & Shell rating offers 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.

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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 strategies developed for warehouse and distribution in the earlier versions of LEED, have been adapted for LEED v5 or will appear 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 specific 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 facilities. It leverages Legacy Arc , a state-of-the-art platform for collecting, managing and benchmarking your building performance across five categories: energy, water, waste, transportation, and human experience.

LEED v4.1 O+M can be used to compare and benchmark warehouse facilities against similar facilities worldwide. Owners and Operators of the Warehouse facilities 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 projects under LEED v4.1 O+M. 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, offering greater fluidity and flexibility for users. Performance tracking, Certification and Reporting will now be delivered in one place.

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

For organizations planning to certify multiple new construction projects, LEED Volume certification can simplify documentation and accelerate reviews for portfolios where uniformity and standardized LEED requirements are embedded in the project delivery process. This option streamlines certification by leveraging similarities in building design and construction practices—regardless of project location. For organizations certifying several buildings within a set timeframe, LEED Volume offers valuable economies of scale for both new construction and commercial interior projects. Learn more about the Volume Program

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

Warehouse and distribution center projects often comprise multiple buildings on a single site under the control of one entity. To address this, LEED Campus Guidance was developed. Its application reflects the complexity and commonality of buildings and infrastructure on shared sites. LEED Campus Guidance is a useful tool for campuses with multiple buildings, common utilities, and campus-wide management policies. By using LEED Campus Guidance, project teams can streamline documentation and review processes, leading to more efficient and successful LEED implementation.

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

There are various technical resources and educational courses available on USGBC website to help project teams apply LEED to their projects.:

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, Mexico – 1st LEED v5 O+M Industrial Warehouse & Distribution certified project in the world
- Hanover Logistics Park 1 – Building 1, USA
- Glenmarie Distribution Center, Malaysia
- Unique, Switzerland
- ATLAS COPCO PUEBLA IAS
- Casei Gerola Logistics Park
- 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 such as 'warehouse' in the search bar or filtering by the LEED Warehouse &Distribution Centers 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 courses in the USGBC online course catalog:

- A LEED rating system for every project
- Think Small: Cargo Bikes in Toronto
- 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, please contact us.