

Updates to Green Building Initiative's Minimum Requirements for Green Globes® Certification

Effective July 1, 2024

The Green Building Initiative's (GBI's) Green Globes assessment and certification system can be applied to all commercial building types, regardless of size, budget, or function. Green Globes incentivizes building owners to strive toward GBI's vision of sustainable, healthy, and resilient buildings for all. To achieve this vision, Green Globes incorporates a range of rigorous criteria that encourage the use of design, construction, and operational practices that enhance performance, improve occupant wellness, and provide community benefit.

GBI sets minimum requirements for its assessment and certification system based on commonly valued environmental and efficiency outcomes, analysis of federal, state/provincial, and local policies, [public input processes](#), and benchmarking against other global rating systems. The technical criteria and point weightings of the New Construction and Existing Buildings certification programs are determined through [GBI's ANSI standard development consensus process](#).

Green Globes is robust yet accessible. The availability of multiple pathways for certain criteria, such as Energy Performance and Water Efficiency, ensures Green Globes applies to all commercial properties. Allowing project teams to designate criteria as non-applicable, followed by Green Globes Assessors (GGAs) review and confirmation, allows for consideration of differences in climate zone, regional requirements, asset type, and unique building features without penalizing project teams. A formal appeals process exists for final decisions by GGAs, however, extensive communication between project teams and assessors during the certification process has prevented nearly all appeals during Green Globes' 20-year history.

To incentivize innovation and best practices, GBI has updated Green Globes minimum requirements for certification while maintaining its signature accessibility. Projects registering on or after July 1, 2024, must meet these updated minimum requirements.

Green Globes Certification Minimum Requirements

Universal Minimum Requirements for Green Globes New Construction & Existing Buildings

- 1) **Achieve points in each environmental assessment area – *FORMALIZING NORM*.** This provision is already a norm for Green Globes certification and is now a formal written requirement. Green Globes building certification is a holistic certification and this formalized requirement underscores the importance of addressing the broad scope of building performance impacts. Specifically, a project will not earn certification if it does not achieve points in every assessment area.
- 2) **Achieve 35% of the total applicable points – *MAINTAINING EXISTING REQUIREMENT*.** Projects must continue to demonstrate compliance with at least 35% of the applicable points out of the maximum 1000 points to be eligible for the base level of certification: One Green Globes. The four available certification levels are as follows: One Green Globes (35-54%), Two Green Globes (55 to 69%), Three Green Globes (70-84%), and Four Green Globes (85-100%).

NOTE: Green Globes is a registered trademark and is always plural, even for One Green Globes achievement.

- 3) **Meet jurisdictional requirements – *MAINTAINING EXISTING REQUIREMENT***. Code adoption varies at state/province, city, county, and federal levels. Therefore, Green Globes requires that the most stringent code adopted at the jurisdictional level must be met to achieve certification. This has been a requirement to achieve Green Globes certification throughout its 20-year history. For example, projects seeking certification in localities adopting a minimum of IECC 2024 will need to meet that requirement to be eligible for Green Globes certification. Similarly, Green Globes defaults to the requirements set by an executive branch government agency or a private sector entity if they are more stringent than Green Globes minimum requirements. As a result, Green Globes certification reflects compliance with a property’s specific jurisdictional or governing entity’s minimum requirements. Projects demonstrating compliance in a jurisdiction requiring IECC 2024 for new buildings are rewarded with a higher proportion of points in the Green Globes for New Construction Energy Performance subsection.

Additional Minimum Requirements for Green Globes New Construction Only

- 4) **Achieve points in the Energy Performance subsection – *FORMALIZING NORM***. Multiple pathways exist in every version of Green Globes for New Construction, such as the ENERGY STAR Target Finder pathway, ASHRAE 90.1 pathway, ASHRAE Building Energy Quotient pathway and, in the upcoming NC 202X version (still undergoing review through the ANSI process expected to complete in Fall 2024), the IECC pathway. These pathways provide options for all property types to pursue and achieve credit for energy performance. With this formalized requirement of what has been a norm for Green Globes certified projects, points must be achieved in the Energy Performance subsection of the Energy environmental assessment area.
- 5) **Meet updated baselines for ASHRAE 90.1 pathway – *ADDING NEW REQUIREMENT***. Additionally, for users selecting the ASHRAE 90.1 pathway, projects located in jurisdictions with less stringent code requirements must provide energy models that demonstrate energy savings at least in compliance with ANSI/ASHRAE/IES Standard 90.1-2016. Projects conducting modeling using an earlier ASHRAE 90.1 baseline must demonstrate a percentage savings equivalent with that of ASHRAE 90.1-2016. For example, models using ASHRAE 90.1-2013 would demonstrate energy cost savings of 8.2% better than a baseline building¹. GBI’s Green Globes Energy Baseline Calculator is available to assist with this translation when modeling using an earlier version of ASHRAE 90.1.

Other Energy Performance pathways. For projects using a pathway other than ASHRAE 90.1, compliance interpretations can be used to demonstrate alternate minimum requirements, such as an ENERGY STAR Target Finder score of 80, which aligns with other market programs driving energy and emissions reductions.

Other Green Globes Protocols. Specific protocols under the Green Globes system, such as Green Globes Multifamily or Multifamily Performance Plus, may have additional or unique minimum requirements that reflect market-based requirements for certain properties (e.g., an ENERGY STAR score of at least 80 (Multifamily), 85 (Multifamily Performance Plus), or energy savings greater than 15% better than baseline).

Projects already registered and in-progress. These minimum requirements apply to all users of Green Globes New Construction for any projects registered on or after July 1, 2024.

¹ ASHRAE Standard 90.1-2016 Receives Determination from U.S. Department of Energy, March 2, 2018.

Sunsetting Green Globes NC 2013. Registration under Green Globes NC 2013 will conclude on June 30, 2024, after which new buildings and major renovations must register under Green Globes NC 2021. NC 202X is undergoing review through the ANSI process and is expected to complete in Fall 2024. Once Green Globes NC 202X is released, a subsequent sunset date for NC 2021 will be set. Projects pursuing certification under NC 2013 must show considerable progress toward completion within 12 months of the sunset date or they will be transferred to the current version.

Additional Minimum Requirements for Green Globes Existing Buildings Only

Other than the universal minimum requirements identified in this document, there are no other additional minimum requirements for Green Globes Existing Buildings at this time.

Ongoing Performance Monitoring and Aggregate Reporting of Performance Achievements

Green Globes New Construction (including major renovation) projects must provide one or more of the following, or equivalent measure:

- Projected Site Energy Use Intensity (EUI)
- ENERGY STAR Target Finder score
- Emissions reduction target
- Projected % performance above ASHRAE 90.1-2016

Green Globes Existing Buildings projects must provide one or more of the following, or equivalent measure:

- Site EUI
- ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager score
- ASHRAE Building Energy Quotient score
- Emissions reduction target

GBI requests that building owners agree to confidentially share ongoing performance data through the Green Globes platform, ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, ASHRAE Building Energy Quotient platform, or another platform for use in aggregated and anonymized performance and savings reporting. GBI also requests that owners agree to a simplified third-party review in support of recertification within three to five years following certification. GBI's Green Globes Journey to Net Zero program, which reviews energy and emissions savings, satisfies this simplified approach and requires reassessment at least every three years. Compliance with ongoing performance monitoring will maintain a building's status within GBI's certified buildings directory.

Exceptions

GBI reserves the right to issue exceptions to its minimum requirements on a case-by-case basis, as needed, following thorough review by a GGA and confirmation by GBI. Project teams or owners will be asked to provide detailed input to the assigned GGA if a minimum requirement cannot be achieved. An Exceptions Policy is intended to ensure there are no unintended consequences or disincentives to pursuing third-party review of sustainability objectives.



Conclusion

GBI's vision is that sustainable, healthy, and resilient buildings are available to all building owners and occupants. To this end, Green Globes incentivizes the incorporation of holistic and innovative design, construction, and operational strategies for every building.

The minimum requirements for GBI rating systems are updated following the GBI [public input process](#). To submit public input on future versions of these minimum requirements, please submit a [public input form](#) to input@thegbi.org.

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