

Common Sustainability Terms

Acid Rain The release of materials which have been transformed by chemical processes in the atmosphere and are then deposited on earth through rain, sleet or fog. These materials can cause damage to buildings and harm animal, plant and human health.

ANSI American National Standards Institute. An accredited BIFMA standards developer that coordinates development and use of voluntary testing standards to support safe, healthy and sustainable work environments.
www.ansi.org

BIFMA Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Association. A non-profit organization that provides an effective forum for office and institutional furniture manufacturers to cooperate and collaborate on appropriate industry issues.
www.bifma.org

Biomass Plant material such as trees, grasses and crops, which can be converted to heat energy to produce electricity.

Biodegradable A material capable of decomposing in nature in a relatively short period of time.

CARB California Air Resource Board. An environmental state-funded group that works to attain and maintain healthy air quality, protect the public from exposure to toxic air contaminants, and provide innovative approaches for complying with air pollution rules and regulations. Established Regulation 93120 which sets acceptable emission levels for products used in the state of California.
www.arb.ca.gov

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) One of the gases in our atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is released into our atmosphere when carbon-containing fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas, and coal are burned. As a result of the world-wide consumption of such fossil fuels, the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere has increased over the past century. CO₂ is the most common Greenhouse Gas.

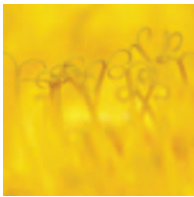
Carbon Offset Credits A credit from another organization's project that results in less carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere than would otherwise occur. Carbon offsets are bought and sold through a number of brokers, online retailers, and trading platforms. For example, wind energy companies often sell carbon offsets. The wind energy company benefits because the carbon offsets it sells make such projects more economically viable. The buyers of the offsets benefit because they can claim that their purchase resulted in new non-polluting energy, which they can use to mitigate their own greenhouse gas emissions. The buyers may also save money as it may be less expensive for them to purchase offsets than to eliminate their own emissions. Other examples of carbon offsets are solar energy, the protection and restoration of land, and the reduction of methane emission in livestock operations.

Certified Wood A credible guarantee that wood based products originate from an environmentally responsible source; assures the public that certain wood and paper products come from responsibly managed forests. USGBC LEED recognizes the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified Wood label.

Chain of Custody (COC) A certificate with a unique number that provides a system for tracking wood through each stage, from the forest to the product's point of sale. It assures the public that the product was produced from a well-managed forest. A part of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification.

Chemicals of Concern Chemicals that are potentially harmful to the environment or individuals. These can be present in end products, manufacturing processes, maintenance procedures, etc. Various organizations publish lists of these chemicals such as the EPA, World Health Organization, etc.

Chicago Climate Change A voluntary, legally binding greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction and trading system for emission sources and offset projects. In this "cap-and-trade program" participants measure their emissions output against a set limit, and those who emit less than that limit can sell their "extras" for cash, while those who emit more must buy more emission credits.
www.chicagoclimatex.com



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Closed Loop The process of making an old product into the same thing again. For example, utilizing used aluminum cans to produce new aluminum cans, or used cardboard into new cardboard packaging.

Cradle-to-Cradle A term used in life cycle assessment to describe a material or product that is recycled into a new product at the end of its defined life. Manufacturers can obtain Cradle-to-Cradle certification for their products from McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry. www.mbcc.com

Design for Environment (DFE) A term describing techniques used to design products with consideration for their environmental impact. DfE seeks to discover product innovations that will meet cost and performance objectives while reducing pollution and waste throughout the life cycle.

Design for Disassembly The design and engineering of a product so that it can be dismantled for easier maintenance, repair, recovery and reuse of components or materials.

Emission The release of any gas, particle or vapor into the environment.

Environmental Management System (EMS) A systematic approach to dealing with the environmental aspects of an organization. It is a 'tool' that enables an organization of any size or type to control the impact of its activities, products or services on the natural environment. See ISO 14001.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) The U.S. federal government organization that sets and enforces environmental regulations nationwide. www.epa.gov

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) A non-profit organization devoted to encouraging the responsible management of the world's forests. FSC certification is available to landowners or companies that sell timber or forest products, to establish that they have practiced forestry consistent with Forest Stewardship Council standards. www.fsc.org

Formaldehyde Industrial chemical used to make other chemicals, building materials, and household products. It is one of the large family of chemical compounds called volatile organic compounds (VOCs). It can be used in adhesive for pressed wood products, preservatives in some paints and coatings, certain insulation materials, etc. It is a colorless, strong-smelling gas.

Furniture Emission Standard (FES) Voluntary testing and conformance standards developed by ANSI/BIFMA to measure the emission levels of furniture. Known as ANSI/BIFMA X7.1 Low-Emitting Furniture and Seating. Utilization of FES is recognized in LEED-CI under the Environmental Quality credit for low emitting furniture.

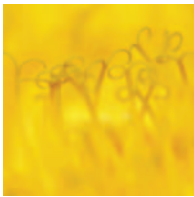
Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) An initiative that began in 1997 to develop an internationally accepted framework for the production of worldwide reports by corporations on sustainable development. www.globalreporting.org

Green Energy Sources of energy considered to be environmentally friendly and non-polluting.

Greenguard A certification and labeling program for interior products that addresses indoor air quality.

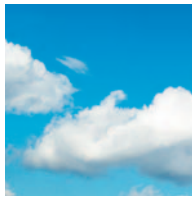
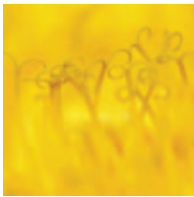
Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Gases in the atmosphere which reduce the loss of heat into space (especially carbon dioxide). This gas buildup contributes to global temperatures through the Greenhouse Effect.

Hazardous Material Any material or substance, which if improperly handled or disposed of, can cause harm to the health and well-being of humans or the environment.



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IDEM	Indiana Department of Environmental Management. Provides environmental oversight and assistance with air, land, pollution prevention and water quality issues throughout the state of Indiana. <i>www.in.gov/idem</i>
Indoor Air Quality	A term used to describe the characteristics of the indoor climate of the building, with special concern for the impact on occupant health.
Indoor Advantage	An air quality certification from Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) that ensures products meet the accepted criteria for VOC emissions established by ANSI/BIFMA X7.1 Low-Emitting Furniture and Seating. Certification conforms to USGBC LEED-CI for EQ4.5. <i>www.scs-certified.com/ecoproducts/indoorairquality/indooradvantage.html</i>
Indoor Advantage Gold	An air quality certification from Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) that conforms to the same standards as Indoor Advantage, as well as additional conformance to USGBC LEED-CI for EQ4.1, EQ4.2, EQ4.4, Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS), California 01350 Special Environmental Requirements and the California Department of General Service (DGS) Indoor Air Quality Specifications for Open Panel Office Furniture <i>www.scs-certified.com/ecoproducts/indoorairquality/indooradvgold.html</i>
ISO 14001	The standard within the ISO 14000 series that specifies the requirements of an environmental management system. It was developed by the International Standards Organization, a non-governmental organization that is chartered to develop voluntary technical standards that aim to make the development, manufacture and supply of goods safer, cleaner and more efficient.
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. A voluntary nationwide green building rating system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). LEED is a nationally accepted benchmark for design, construction and operation of green buildings. There are four levels of LEED certification for new buildings-Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum. Certification is based on a point system, with points awarded for performance in categories of water, energy, materials, indoor environment, innovation in materials and sustainable sites. <i>www.usgbc.org/leed</i>
Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)	The comprehensive examination of a product's environmental and economic effects and potential impacts throughout its lifetime including raw material extraction, transportation, manufacturing, use, and disposal.
LOHAS Consumers	An acronym for Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability, which describes an integrated, rapidly growing market for goods and services that appeal to consumers who have a meaningful sense of environmental and social responsibility and incorporate those values into their purchase decisions.
Post-Consumer Recycled Content	Material that has been recovered after its use as a consumer product, and is used to make another product. Examples include tennis shoes used to make playground surfaces or aluminum soda cans recovered to make more.
Pre-Consumer Recycled Content	Left-over or scrap material generated by a manufacturing process that is collected and reused to make new products. An example is fabric scraps from an upholstery process that are used to make automotive insulation.
Rapidly Renewable Materials	Materials that can be harvested within 10 years. Cork, bamboo and wheatboard are examples.
Recyclability	The ability of a product or material to be recovered from, or otherwise diverted from, the solid waste stream for the purpose of recycling.
Recycled Product	A product made in whole or part from material recovered from the waste stream.



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Renewable Energy	Energy derived from sources that do not become depleted such as the sun, wind, ocean, biomass, and heat from the earth's interior.
Scientific Certification Systems (SCS)	A third-party provider of certification, auditing and testing services, and standards, founded in 1984. SCS offers the Indoor Advantage, Indoor Advantage Gold and Sustainable Choice certification programs. www.scs-certified.org
Sick Building Syndrome	A situation in which a building's occupants experience acute health and/or comfort issues that appear to be linked to time spent there, but where no specific illness or cause can be identified.
SmartWay Program	A voluntary program sponsored by the EPA in collaboration with the freight industry. Goals are to increase energy efficiency while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. www.epa.gov/smartway
Sustainability	"Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."
Sustainability Standard (SS)	An open, consensus-based method to evaluate the sustainable attributes of furniture. Developed by BIFMA. SS covers multiple aspects including raw materials, manufacturing, transportation, product usage, reuse/recycle, and product disposal. www.bifma.org/public/SusFurnStd.html
Sustainable Choice	A certification from Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) that ensures products meet the sustainability requirements of the BIFMA Sustainability Standard.
Sustainable Packaging	Pack that maximizes the use of recycled material, and is healthy and safe for individuals throughout its life cycle.
Trees for Tomorrow	A program sponsored by Kimball International to distribute tree seedlings to employees, distribution partners, customers and communities. Established in 1990, over 360,000 seedlings have been distributed to date.
Triple Bottom Line	Also known as "People, Planet, Profit", triple bottom line is a reporting framework that expands the measures for organizational success to include environmental and social factors as well as economic performance.
UV Finish	The use of ultra-violet light to cure a finish. Characteristics of UV finish include excellent durability and reduced emissions.
USGBC	U.S. Green Building Council. A non-profit organization consisting of professionals from the building industry devoted to promoting buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work. USGBC developed the LEED certification guidelines. www.usgbc.org
VOCs	Volatile Organic Compounds. Materials that are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids. Consistently found higher indoors, VOCs include a variety of chemicals, some of which may have short- and long-term adverse health effects.
Voluntary Idling Program for Cleaner Air	Program developed by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) to assist freight carriers and manufacturers, distributors and retailers located in Indiana reduce or eliminate unnecessary heavy-duty diesel truck idling and in turn reduce greenhouse gas emissions. www.in.gov/idem/4128.htm
Wastewater	Water carrying dissolved or suspended solids from homes, farms, businesses and industries.
Wind Power	The conversion of wind energy into more useful forms, (usually electricity) using wind turbines.