



Going for Gold – BC Housing’s quest for LEED® Gold Certification

BC Housing is committed to developing and managing environmentally sustainable social housing for British Columbians in greatest need. To help live up to the commitment, BC Housing's new home office in Burnaby was built to meet the Gold Standard in the nationally-recognized **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System™ for Commercial Interiors (LEED CI)**. And we have adopted the Gold standard for all of our new social housing projects.

The home office is a model of environmentally responsible design, construction and operation. Located on three floors of a major office tower, the home office was designed and built to reduce BC Housing's environmental footprint, improve workplace comfort, and provide health benefits to both staff and visitors.

To achieve LEED® CI Gold Certification, BC Housing started with environmentally sustainable materials and practices:

- All paints and adhesives, as well as carpeting and office furniture, are “low-emitting”, which means they discharge low levels of gas compared to conventional building materials. This improves air quality and provides health benefits for everyone who spends time at the home office.
 - Existing furniture is being recycled and reused and any new furnishings are made from recycled and recyclable materials.
 - Energy-efficient electronics, computers and appliances are in place to save both energy and money over time.
 - Low-flush toilets and motion-activated faucets are reducing water waste.
 - Office design maximizes natural daylight to reduce electricity consumption. Necessary lighting uses a minimum number of energy-saving light fixtures with motion-activated sensors.
 - Ventilation systems are motion controlled to reduce heating and cooling in unoccupied spaces.
 - Green cleaning products are being used to avoid environmental toxins and improve air quality.
 - Blue-box recycling programs are in place to reduce waste.
 - Incentives are being offered to encourage BC Housing employees to use transit and carpools, or to cycle or walk to work.
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Examples of LEED® CI Gold standards at our home office include:

Recycled, Low-emitting Furniture

BC Housing's new home office features recycled furniture made from 100 percent recyclable materials. This includes workstation panel covers and panel interiors comprised of 100 percent recycled wood and polypropylene – no lead paints or other harmful, gas-emitting materials are used. As well, the recycled panels are lower in height, which allows employees to enjoy more natural daylight and reduces our electricity needs. BC Housing has used recycled furniture for several years because it's better for the environment, reduces landfill waste and doesn't require the consumption of new resources.

Cork Rubber Flooring

Cork rubber is a natural, environmentally friendly and practical flooring material. To make it, cork and rubber – two naturally occurring materials – are heated and pressurized. The result is a durable, flexible, quiet flooring product that has spring and is comfortable under foot. Cork rubber flooring emits lower levels of gas than most other flooring products and is easy to clean using a water-dampened mop – no chemicals are required. BC Housing's new home office features cork rubber flooring as a commitment to employees' and visitors' comfort, safety and health.

Mountain Pine Beetle Wood

Millions of hectares of British Columbia forests are infested by Mountain Pine Beetles – finger-nail sized bugs that eat pine bark, killing the trees. The beetles leave a blue stain in the sapwood of affected trees, but comprehensive testing confirms the wood's strength and usefulness is preserved. BC Housing is employing the lumber left behind by the hungry beetles. For example, the reception furniture at our new home office is made of Mountain Pine Beetle wood.

Recycled Carpet

More than five billion pounds of carpet are replaced each year in North America. Much of it can be rewoven into new carpet fibres by blending it with recycled materials like plastic bottles and textiles. Recycled carpet feels much the same as conventional carpet, but is more resilient and colour-fast. It also emits lower levels of toxic gases, helping improve indoor air quality. Recycled carpet is installed in many areas throughout BC Housing's new home office.

The quest for LEED certification is all part of our livegreen strategy – BC Housing's bold new housing sustainability action plan.

To find out more about livegreen and the LEED® CI Gold Certification project, visit www.bchousing.org/livegreen and view our livegreen videos.