

CALGreen: 2010 California Green Building Standards Code

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What is CALGreen?

- The green building standards section of Title 24, the California Building Standards Code
- Takes effect January 1, 2011 after being unanimously approved in January 2010
- Goals are to achieve major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, and water use
- Designed to provide clarity in the definition of green building and the context of California's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals under AB 32
- Upon passing building inspection, property owners can label their facilities as "CALGreen Compliant"

What is the significance of CALGreen?

- The first mandatory statewide green building standards code in the United States
- One of the first pieces of California's AB 32 greenhouse gas emission reduction regulatory process to be fully adopted and implemented
- California Air Resources Board estimates that the mandatory provisions will result in a greenhouse gas emission reduction of 3 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent in 2020

What does CALGreen require?

- 20% mandatory reduction in indoor water use
- Separate water meters for nonresidential buildings' indoor and outdoor water use
- Moisture-sensing irrigation systems for larger landscaping projects
- Diversion of 50% of construction waste from landfills
- Mandatory inspections of energy systems, such as heat furnaces, air conditioners, and mechanical equipment, for nonresidential buildings over 10,000 sq. feet
- Low-pollutant emitting interior finishing materials, including but not limited to carpet, paint, vinyl flooring, and particle board

How is CALGreen structured?

- **A set of mandatory regulatory building code provisions that establish a baseline** for green construction practices in California
- Beyond the mandatory provisions, more stringent voluntary provisions for improved environmental performance are categorized into a two-tier system
- Tier 1 and Tier 2 voluntary provisions include increasingly more strict performance standards, higher percentages of resource consumption reductions, and increased rates of waste diversion and materials reuse

Which jurisdictions and what type of buildings does CALGreen apply to?

- All cities and counties in California must comply with the mandatory provisions
- Local governments are permitted to amend CALGreen based on local climatic, geological, and topographical conditions pending state approval

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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- Mandatory provisions apply to all new construction of low-rise residential (3 stories or less), commercial, hospital, and school buildings
- No Tier 1 or Tier 2 voluntary provisions exist for schools
- Standards are not applied retroactively to existing buildings
- Inspections and verifications of compliance are conducted by the same local and state authorities, using the same enforcement infrastructure, as previous state building codes

What about cities and counties that already have green building standards?

- Mandatory provisions are intended to provide minimum green building standards
- Local governments are allowed to establish stricter green building standards
- Does not nullify existing local green building regulations that exceed the mandatory minimum requirements
- Local governments are permitted to establish Tier 1 or Tier 2 voluntary provisions as mandatory standards for their local jurisdiction

How is CALGreen related to LEED?

- Standards required for all levels of LEED certification are stricter than CALGreen mandatory provisions
- USGBC played a significant role in the development of CALGreen
- LEED and other third-party certification systems are not directly incorporated into mandatory or voluntary provisions
- Whereas LEED raises the ceiling on green building standards, CALGreen raises the floor

What issues will future versions of CALGreen likely address?

- CALGreen, as part of Title 24, will be updated every 3 years
- Existing buildings have been identified as an important area that must be addressed by future versions of CALGreen

What opportunities does CALGreen present to green building professionals?

- Significant market opportunity for green building professionals due to increased demand for green building knowledge and experience
- Green building professionals will have a competitive advantage over conventional building professionals
- Developers and builders that lack in-house experience may increasingly turn to consultants with green building knowledge to bring projects up to code
- Green building professionals will have an opportunity to provide education and training services to those without green building knowledge
- Inspection and enforcement authorities may also be in need of green building education and training

* Disclaimer: Please note that this document was prepared by three chapter members for informational purposes only. This document does not represent the opinions of the USGBC LA Chapter.