

# Glossary

## **Advanced Framing**

Framing techniques that use less lumber, thereby reducing material cost and use of natural resources, and increasing the level of insulation as a result.

## **Air Barrier**

A rigid material installed around a building frame to prevent or reduce the infiltration of air into the interior of a structure. To improve energy efficiency by maintaining conditioned air inside the home and improving the efficacy of insulation, an air barrier is installed.

## **Air Infiltration**

Uncontrolled inward air leakage to conditioned spaces through unintentional openings in ceilings, floors and walls from unconditioned spaces or the outdoors.

## **Arboretum**

A place where trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants are cultivated for scientific and educational purposes; may be part of a botanical garden

## **Bio-Based Product**

Commercial or industrial products (other than food or feed) that are composed in whole, or in significant part, of biological products, renewable agricultural materials (including plant, animal, and marine materials), or forestry materials, including intermediate ingredients or feedstocks

## **Biodegradable**

Capable of being broken down, safely and in a reasonable amount of time, into the raw materials of nature

## **Brownfield**

A piece of land that has been developed for industrial purposes, polluted, and then abandoned. A brownfield site is real property where the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant (as defined by the EPA).

## **Building Envelope/Building Enclosure**

The exterior surface of a building's construction: the walls, windows, floors and roof.

## **Built Environment**

Man-made surroundings, ranging in scale from buildings and parks to neighborhoods and cities that can often include their supporting infrastructure

## **Carbon Footprint**

The amount of greenhouse gases and, specifically, carbon dioxide emitted due to the consumption of fossil fuels by either a person's activities or a product's manufacture and transport, during a given period of time

**Compound Fluorescent Lighting (CFL)**

A type of fluorescent lamp that uses less energy and has a longer life, when compared to incandescent lamps

**Composite Material**

A combination of two or more different materials that are bonded together to create a new material

**Compost**

A mixture that consists largely of decayed organic matter and is used for fertilizing or conditioning the land

**Eco-charrette**

An intense, interactive brainstorming and team-building exercise in which all those involved in a building design project focus on ideas for efficient use of energy and resources in a new building.

**Emission**

The act of producing or sending out something, especially gas or radiation, from a commercial, industrial, or residential source

**Energy Efficient**

Delivering more services for the same energy input, or the same services for less energy input

**Energy Star**

An international standard for energy efficient products that was begun by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Department of Energy to help businesses and individuals save money and protect our climate through superior energy efficiency

**Engineered Lumber**

Composite wood products made from lumber, fiber or veneer, and glue.

**Environmental Impact**

Any change to the environment, good or bad, that is a result of industrial manufacturing activities, products or services

**Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs)**

A verified document that reports environmental data of products based on life cycle assessment and other relevant information and in accordance with the international standard ISO 14025

**Environmentally Friendly or Eco-Friendly**

Refers to goods and services, laws, guidelines and policies that claim to inflict reduced, minimal, or no harm at all upon ecosystems or the environment.

**Forest Stewardship Council Certification (FSC)**

Was created to promote environmentally responsible management of forests. A third party certification organization, evaluating the sustainability of forest products. FSC certified wood

products have met specific criteria in areas such as forest management, labor conditions and fair trade.

### **Geothermal Energy**

Energy generated from the earth that is clean and sustainable. Geothermal heat pumps can be used to heat and cool buildings,

### **Green Globes**

An assessment and rating system operated by the Green Building Initiative for integrating environmentally friendly design into commercial buildings.

### **Green Field**

A piece of undeveloped land.

### **Greenguard**

Certification that a product meets emission thresholds for formaldehyde, total aldehydes, total volatile organic compounds (TVOCs), and one-tenth of the threshold limit value (TLV) – a regulatory standard – for many other compounds. The program also assesses emissions of other chemicals of concern.

### **Green Label**

A certification program by the Carpet and Rug Institute for carpet and adhesives meeting specified criteria for release of volatile compounds.

### **Green Roof/Living Roof**

A roof that is partially or completely covered with vegetation that lasts longer than conventional roofs, reduces energy costs, absorbs storm water and can provide a peaceful retreat for people and animals.

### **Green Seal**

A certification that promotes sustainability in the marketplace by developing life cycle-based sustainability standards for products, services and companies and offering third party certification for those that meet the criteria in the standard.

### **Greenwashing**

When a company or organization spends more time and money claiming to be “green” through advertising and marketing than actually implementing business practices that minimize environmental impact.

### **Greywater**

Wastewater from bathroom sinks, showers, tubs, and washing machines than can be reused as a source of irrigation.

### **Ground Source Heat Pump**

A heat pump that uses the ground temperature instead of air temperature to cool or heat a home. Usually this is accomplished with underground water pipes that transfer the ground temperature into the heat pump.

**Harvested Rainwater**

Rainwater that is collected through the use of gutters and a rain barrel for irrigation purposes.

**Healthy House**

Combining an energy efficient building envelope and mechanical systems with benign building materials and green cleaning products for an allergy free, non-toxic design.

**Health Product Declarations (HPDs)**

Disclosure of product contents, emissions, and health information to help designers, specifiers, and building owners and occupants make informed purchasing decisions.

**Heat Recovery Ventilator**

An air-to-air heat exchanger with balanced exhaust and supply fans that is an energy-efficient way to meet necessary ventilation needs without producing drafts or air pressure imbalance on a heating or cooling system.

**Incandescent Light Bulb**

An electric light in which a filament is heated to produce artificial light. This type of lighting uses more energy than CFLs and LEDs.

**Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)**

Refers to the air quality within and around buildings and structures, especially as it relates to the health and comfort of building occupants. IAQ can be influenced by building materials, cleaning procedures and ventilation.

**Infill**

Developing on empty lots of land within an urban area rather than on new undeveloped land outside the city.

**International Green Construction Code (IGCC)**

A building code that includes sustainability measures for the entire construction project and site, from design through construction, certificate of occupancy and beyond. This code establishes minimum green requirements for buildings and complements voluntary rating systems.

**LED**

A light-emitting diode product that is assembled into a lamp to give off light. Use less energy than incandescent bulbs and some fluorescents.

**Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)**

A building rating standard based on a four level certification program that encompasses design techniques for the building envelope and the interior for new construction and renovations.

**Life Cycle Cost**

An economic analysis for all costs relates to building, operating, and maintaining a project over a defined period of time.

**Low E Windows**

Window glass that has been treated to reflect heat, while allowing light to pass through. Proven to reduce energy consumption, keeping spaces warm and cool when needed.

**Mixed-Use Development**

A development that includes diverse use types, including elements of housing, retail and office space.

**Non-toxic**

A claim that a product, substance, or chemical will not cause adverse health effects.

**Occupancy Sensors**

A device that automatically turns off lighting, HVAC, and/or electricity once a room is vacant.

**Passive Design**

A design approach that uses natural elements, often sunlight, to heat, cool, or light a building.

**Passive House**

A standard for energy efficiency in a building, reducing its ecological footprint. It results in ultra-low energy buildings that require little energy for space heating or cooling.

**Payback Period**

The time estimated for a capital investment to pay for itself, calculated by relating the cost of the investment to the profit it will earn or savings it will incur.

**Photovoltaics (PVs)**

A system that converts sunlight directly into electricity.

**Post-Consumer Recycled**

An end product that has completed its life cycle as a consumer item and would otherwise have been disposed of as solid waste.

**Pre-consumer Recycled**

Materials that are generated by manufacturers and processors, and may consist of scrap, trimmings and other by-products that were never used in the consumer market.

**Product Transparency Declarations (PTDs)**

Provides specifiers with a list of product ingredients in the building product and helps specifiers know whether any ingredients are present at levels requiring a warning notification to product installers and/or building occupants due to ingredient exposure from the building product.

**Radiant Barrier**

A material (typically an aluminum foil) that is good at blocking the transfer of radiant heat across a space because it has a low emissivity. In a hot climate, it is often installed in attics under the roof decking to keep the attic cooler.

**Radiant Floor Heat**

A thermal mass floor with pipes laid underneath to transfer heat generated either by a solar collector or other type of liquid heating system.

### **Rainwater Catchment/Harvest**

On-site rainwater harvest and storage systems used to offset potable water needs for a building and/or landscape.

### **Rain Garden (Bioretention)**

A landscape feature that incorporates deep porous soils and specially designed plantings to gather, store and treat stormwater.

### **Rapidly Renewable Materials**

Material that is considered to be an agricultural product that takes 10 years or less to grow or raise and to harvest in an ongoing and sustainable fashion. Examples include bamboo flooring, biocomposite veneers, fiber-based finishes, wool and cotton insulation.

### **Recovered Material**

By-products, components, or parts of a production or waste stream captured or separated for reuse.

### **Recyclable Content**

Materials that can be recovered or diverted from the waste stream for recycling/reuse.

### **Recycled Content**

The percentage of recycled materials in a product, generally determined by weight.

### **Recycling**

The process of converting waste into new products.

### **Renewable Energy**

Energy resources that produce indefinitely without being depleted.

### **Renewable Resources**

Resources that are created or produced as they are consumed.

### **Retrofit**

The replacement, upgrade or improvement of a piece of equipment or structure in an existing building or facility.

### **R-Value**

The capacity of an insulating material to resist heat flow. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating power.

### **Salvage**

Building materials diverted from the waste stream intended for reuse. Commonly salvaged materials include structural beams and posts, flooring, doors, cabinetry, brick and decorative items.

**Solar Energy**

Energy derived from the sun in the form of solar radiation.

**Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)**

A forest certification standard.

**Sustainability**

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

**Toxic**

A material or product that can produce injury or death when inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through the skin.

**UL Listed**

The manufacturer has demonstrated the ability to produce a product that complies with UL requirements with respect to reasonably foreseeable risks associated with the product.

**Universal Design**

The design of products and environments that are usable by all people, regardless of age or physical ability, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design.

**Urban Sprawl**

The unplanned, uncontrolled spreading of urban development into areas adjoining a city.

**USGBC**

A national organization whose mission is to accelerate the adoption of green building practices, technologies, policies, and standards.

**Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)**

Chemicals that are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids that may have short- and long-term adverse health effects.

**WaterSense**

Certifies products that use less water with water-efficient products, new homes, and services. Aims to promote the value of water efficiency, provides consumers with easy ways to save water, encourages innovation in manufacturing, and decreases water use and reduces strain on water resources and infrastructure.

**Wind Power**

Systems that convert air movement into mechanical or electrical energy. Driven by the wind, turbine blades turn a generator or power a mechanical pump. Wind generators include a tower and wind turbine, and can be off-grid or grid-tied.

**Xeriscaping**

Landscaping design for conserving water that uses drought-resistant or drought-tolerant plants.

**Zero-Energy**

A structure or product that generates as much energy to the grid as it uses from the grid.