



Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute

Sustainability

with updates to LEED V4 and IgCC2015



designer's notebook

Sustainability

Sustainability Concepts

Sustainable development is often defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.¹ Worldwide, people are currently using 20% more resources than can be regenerated. In particular, the U.S. population consumes more resources on a per capita basis than any other nation.

The environmental impact of constructing and operating buildings in most countries is significant. Consider that buildings consume 74% of the electricity generated in the U.S. and more than 39% of the primary energy (such as natural gas); produce 30% of the national output of greenhouse gas emissions; use 12% of the potable water in the U.S.; and employ 40% of raw materials (3 billion tons annually) for construction and operation worldwide.²

Building materials can have a significant effect on the environmental impact of the construction and operation of a building. Some materials may have to be used in special configurations, or employ different combinations, to achieve sustainability; the inherent properties of precast concrete, however, make it a natural choice for improving the sustainability of buildings. Precast concrete contributes to sustainable practices by incorporating integrated design; using materials efficiently; and reducing construction waste, site disturbance, and noise.

Although most consumers are concerned with the present and future health of the natural environment, few are willing to pay more for a building, product, process, or innovation that minimizes environmental burdens. The concept of sustainability, however, balances sustainable design with cost-effectiveness. Using integrated design (also called the holistic or whole-building approach), a building's materials, systems, and design are examined from the perspective of all project team members and tenants. Energy efficiency, cost, durability (or service life), space flexibility, environmental impact, and quality of life are all considered when decisions are made regarding the selection of a building design.

Triple Bottom Line

The triple bottom line — environment, society, and economy — emphasizes that economic consequences are related to environmental and social consequences. Consequences to society include impacts on employees, communities, and developing countries, as well as ethics, population growth, and security. Reducing materials and energy used, and emissions produced, by buildings has impacts far beyond those of the buildings themselves, such as:

- Using less materials means fewer new quarries are needed.
- Using less energy means fewer new power plants need to be constructed, less pollution is emitted into the air, and dependence on foreign energy sources is reduced.
- Less emissions to air means a reduction in respiratory conditions, such as asthma.

- Using less water means a reduction in demands on the infrastructure to find and deliver new sources of water.

All of these examples indicate how building energy and utility use affect the local community. These are especially important since most communities do not want new power plants, quarries, or landfills built near them.

The community can also be considered globally. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the U.S. increased from 5.3 ktons (4.8 ktonnes) in 2012 to 5.4 ktons in 2013. This increase was due to the increase in cold weather, which led to an increase in energy intensity. Despite this increase, 2013 levels were still 10% below 2005 levels.³ Energy and material consumption, waste, and emissions to air, land, and water need to be considered from a global as well as regional perspective in a global market.

Cost of Building Green

A sustainable design can result in a building that is energy and resource efficient. Energy- and water-efficient buildings have lower operating costs (in the range of 25 to 30% lower energy costs) and a higher facility value than conventional buildings.⁴ Lower energy costs translate into smaller capacity requirements for mechanical equipment (heating and cooling) and lower first costs for such equipment. Effective use of daylighting and passive solar techniques can further reduce lighting, heating, and cooling costs. Reusing materials, such as demolished concrete, for base or fill material, can reduce costs associated with hauling and disposing of materials.

When sustainability is an objective at the outset of the design process, the cost of a sustainable building is competitive. Often green buildings cost no more than conventional buildings because of the resource-efficient strategies used, such as downsizing of more costly mechanical, electrical, and structural systems. Reported increases in first costs for green buildings generally vary between 0 and 2% more, with costs expected to decrease as project teams become more experienced with green building strategies and design.⁵ Generally, a 2% increase in construction costs will result in a savings of 10 times the initial investment in operating costs for utilities (energy, water, and waste) in the first 20 years of the building's life.

Buildings with good daylighting and indoor air quality— both common features of sustainable buildings— have increased labor productivity, worker retention, and days worked. These benefits contribute directly to a company's profits because salaries — which are about ten times higher than rent, utilities, and maintenance combined — are the largest expense for most companies occupying office space.⁶ In schools with good daylighting and indoor air quality, students have higher test scores and lower absenteeism.

Holistic/Integrated Design

A key tenet of sustainable design is the holistic or integrated design approach. This approach requires coordinating the architectural, structural, civil, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical designs early in the schematic design phases to discern possible system interactions, and then deciding which beneficial interactions are essential for project success. For example, a well-insulated building with few windows that face east and west will require less heating and air-conditioning. This could impact the mechanical design by requiring fewer ducts and registers and

perhaps allow for the elimination of registers along the building perimeter. Precast concrete walls act as thermal storage to delay and reduce peak loads, while also positively affecting the structural design of the building. **Table 1** provides other integrated design strategies.

Integration Strategy	Sustainability Attribute
Use precast panel as interior surface.	Saves material; no need for additional framing and drywall.
Use hollow-core panels as ducts.	Saves material and energy; eliminates ductwork and charges thermal mass of panel.
Use thermal mass in combination with appropriate insulation levels in walls.	Thermal mass with insulation provides energy benefits that exceed the benefits of mass or insulation alone in most climates.
Design wall panels to be disassembled for building function changes.	Saves material; extends service life of panels.
Use durable materials.	Materials with a long life cycle and low maintenance will require less replacement and maintenance during the life of the building.
Use natural resources such as daylight, trees for shading, and ventilation.	Reduces lighting and cooling energy use. Increases indoor air quality and employee productivity.
Reduce and recycle construction waste.	Reduces transportation and disposal costs of wastes. Fewer virgin materials are used if construction waste is recycled for another project.
Use building commissioning to ensure that building standards are met.	Energy savings and indoor air quality are most likely attained during the building life if inspections are made to ensure that construction was as designed.

Table 1 Integration Strategies.

A holistic viewpoint will also take into account the surrounding site environment:

- Are shelters needed for people who take public transportation to work?
- Can bike paths be incorporated for those who bike to work?
- Can native landscaping be used to reduce the need for irrigation?

The eight elements of integrated design are:

- Emphasize the integrated process.
- Consider the building as a whole — often interactive, often multi-functional.
- Focus on the life cycle.
- Have disciplines work together as a team from the start.
- Conduct relevant assessments to help determine requirements and set goals.
- Develop tailored solutions that yield multiple benefits while meeting requirements and goals.
- Evaluate solutions.

- Ensure that requirements and goals are met.

Contracts and requests for proposals (RFPs) should clearly describe sustainability requirements and project documentation required.⁷

3Rs – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The 3Rs of reducing waste can be applied to the building industry.

Reduce the amount of material used and the toxicity of waste materials

Precast and prestressed concrete can be designed to optimize (or lessen) the amount of concrete used. It is generally estimated that 2% of the concrete at a plant is waste, but because it is generated at the plant, 95% of the waste is used beneficially (see the section “Precast Concrete Production”). Industrial wastes such as fly ash, slag cement, and silica fume can be used as partial replacements for cement with certain aesthetic (color) and early-compressive-strength restrictions, thereby reducing the amount of cement used in concrete. Precast concrete generates a low amount of waste with a low toxicity.

Reuse products and containers; repair what can be reused

Precast concrete components can be reused when buildings are expanded. Concrete pieces from demolished structures can be reused to protect shorelines. Because the precast process is self-contained, formwork and finishing materials are reused. Wood forms can generally be used 25 to 30 times without major maintenance while fiberglass, concrete, and steel forms have significantly longer service lives.

Recycle as much as possible, which includes buying products with recycled content

Concrete in most urban areas is recycled as fill or road base. Wood and steel forms are recycled when they become worn or obsolete. Virtually all reinforcing steel is made from recycled steel. Many cement plants burn waste-derived fuels such as spent solvents, used oils, and tires in the manufacture of cement.

Life Cycle

A life-cycle analysis can be done in terms of the economic life-cycle cost or environmental life-cycle impact. Although the two approaches are different, they each consider the impacts of the building design over the life of the building — an essential part of sustainable design. When the energy and resource impacts of sustainable design are considered over the life of the building, a sustainable design often becomes more cost effective. Conversely, when the energy consuming impacts of a low-first-cost design are considered over the life of the building, the building may not be an attractive investment.

Practitioners of sustainable design believe that the key to sustainable building lies in long-life, adaptable, low-energy buildings. The durability and longevity of precast concrete makes it an ideal choice.

Life-Cycle Cost and Service Life

A life-cycle-cost analysis is a powerful tool used to make economic decisions for selection of building materials and systems. This analysis is the practice of accounting for all expenditures incurred over the lifetime of a particular structure. Costs at any given time are discounted back to a fixed date, based on assumed rates of inflation and the time-value of money. A life-cycle cost is in terms of dollars and is equal to the construction cost plus the present value of future utility, maintenance, and replacement costs over the life of the building.

Using this widely accepted method, it is possible to compare the economics of different building alternatives that may have different cash-flow factors but that provide a similar standard of service. The result is financial information for decision making, which can be used to balance capital costs and future operation, repair, or maintenance costs. Often, building designs with the lowest first costs for new construction will require higher costs during the building life. So, even with their low first cost, these buildings may have a higher life-cycle cost. Conversely, durable materials, such as precast concrete, often have a lower life-cycle cost. In the world of selecting the lowest bid, owners need to be made aware of the benefits of a lower life-cycle cost so that specifications require durable building materials such as precast concrete. Many owners and developers build buildings with a short time frame in mind before selling the property. In the past, these owners and developers have not been interested in long-term building performance and cost savings. However, as sustainable building design becomes more popular and is required more by regulation, market forces are beginning to influence those owners and developers who previously took a short-term approach to their buildings to consider long-term life-cycle costs.

The Building Life-Cycle Cost software from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) provides economic analysis of capital investments, energy, and operating costs of buildings, systems, and components. The software includes the means to evaluate costs and benefits of energy conservation and complies with ASTM standards related to building economics and Federal Energy Management Program requirements.

Accepted methods of performing life-cycle-cost analyses of buildings assume a 20-year life with the building maintaining 80% of its original value at the end of this time period. Buildings actually last hundreds of years if they are not torn down due to obsolescence. Sustainability practitioners advocate that the foundation and shell of new buildings be designed for a service life of 100 years. Allowing extra capacity in columns, load-bearing walls, and floors would allow for future added floors or greater floor loads from change in use. Additionally, extra capacity in roofs for rooftop gardens adds to the building's long term flexibility.

On the other end of the spectrum, real estate speculators plan for a return on investment in seven years and generally do not adhere to the life-cycle-cost approach. Similarly, minimum code requirements for energy-conserving measures in the building shell are generally for five years, meaning initial insulation levels pay for themselves in five years. Because it is difficult and costly to add more insulation to the building shell after it has been constructed, the five-year payback for insulation is not consistent with the life-cycle cost associated with 100-year use of buildings.

Advanced building-design guidelines from the New Buildings Institute; American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE); and others specify insulation levels for those who want to build cost-effective buildings above minimum code levels. Alternatively, thermal mass and insulation can be included

in the life-cycle-cost analysis to determine cost-effective levels. However, this requires whole-building energy analyses to determine annual costs to heat and cool the building. Economic levels of insulation depend on climate, location, building geometry, and building type.

Environmental Life-Cycle Inventory and Life-Cycle Assessment

A *life-cycle assessment* (LCA) is an environmental assessment of the life cycle of a product. An LCA looks at all aspects of a product life cycle — from the first stages of harvesting and extracting raw materials from nature, to transforming and processing these raw materials into a product, to using the product, and ultimately recycling it or disposing of it back into nature. An LCA consists of the four phases shown in **Fig. 1**.

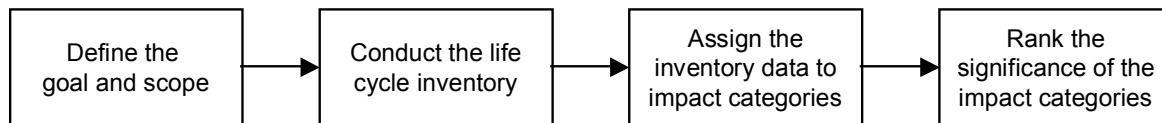


Figure 1 A life-cycle assessment consists of these four phases.

The LCA of a building is necessary to evaluate the full environmental impact of a building over its life. Green buildings rating systems, models such as BEES (www.bfrl.nist.gov/oa/software/bees.html), and programs that focus only on recycled content or renewable resources provide only a partial snapshot of the environmental impact a building can leave. An LCA of a building includes environmental effects due to:

- Extraction of materials and fuel used for energy.
- Manufacture of building components.
- Transportation of materials and components.
- Assembly and construction.
- Operation, including energy consumption, maintenance, repair, and renovations.
- Demolition, disposal, recycling, and reuse of the building at the end of its functional or useful life

A full set of effects includes land use, resource use, climate change, health effects, acidification, and toxicity.

An LCA involves time-consuming manipulation of large quantities of data. A model such as SimaPro (www.pre.nl/simapro) provides data for common building materials and options for selecting LCA impacts. The Portland Cement Association (PCA) publishes reports with life-cycle inventory (LCI) data on cement and concrete. All models require a separate analysis of annual heating, cooling, and other occupant loads using a program such as DOE-2 ([simulationresearch.LBL.gov](http://simulationresearch.lbl.gov)) or Energy Plus (www.energyplus.gov).

An LCI is the second stage of an LCA (after goal and scope definition). An LCI accounts for all the individual environmental flows to and from a product throughout its life cycle. It consists of the materials and energy needed to make and use a product and the emissions to air, land, and water associated with making and using that product.

Several organizations have proposed how an LCA should be conducted. Organizations such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (www.iso.org), the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC), (www.setac.org), and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) (www.epa.gov), have documented standard procedures for conducting an LCA. These procedures are generally consistent with each other: they are all scientific, transparent, and repeatable.

LCI boundary

The usefulness of an LCA or LCI depends on where the boundaries of a product are drawn. A common approach is to consider all the environmental flows from extraction to deconstruction (including reuse, recycling, and disposal if necessary). For example, the system boundary in **Fig. 2** shows the most significant processes for precast concrete operations. It includes most of the inputs and outputs associated with producing concrete — from extracting raw material to producing mixed concrete ready for placement in forms. The system boundary also includes the upstream profile of manufacturing cement, as well as quarrying and processing aggregates, and transporting cement, fly ash, and aggregates to the concrete plant. Energy and emissions associated with transporting the primary materials from their source to the concrete plant are also included in the boundary. It does not, however, include upstream profiles of fuel, electricity, water, or supplementary cementitious materials. This LCI also does not include form preparation, placing the concrete in the formwork, curing, and stripping. A complete precast concrete LCI would include all these steps.

An upstream profile can be thought of as a separate LCI that is itself an ingredient to a product. For example, the upstream profile of cement is essentially an LCI of cement, which can be imported into an LCI of concrete. The LCI of concrete itself can then be imported into an LCI of a product, such as an office building.

To get the most useful information out of an LCI, precast concrete should be considered in context of its end use. For example, in a building, the environmental impacts of the building materials are usually dwarfed by the environmental effects associated with building operations such as heating, ventilating, cooling, and lighting.

The LCI of materials generally do not consider embodied energy and emissions associated with construction of manufacturing plant equipment and buildings, nor the heating and cooling of such buildings. This is generally acceptable if their materials, embodied energy, and associated emissions account for less than 1% of those in the process being studied. For example, the SETAC guidelines indicate that inputs to a process do not need to be included in an LCI if they

- are less than 1% of the total mass of the processed materials or product,
- do not contribute significantly to a toxic emission, and
- do not have a significant associated energy consumption.

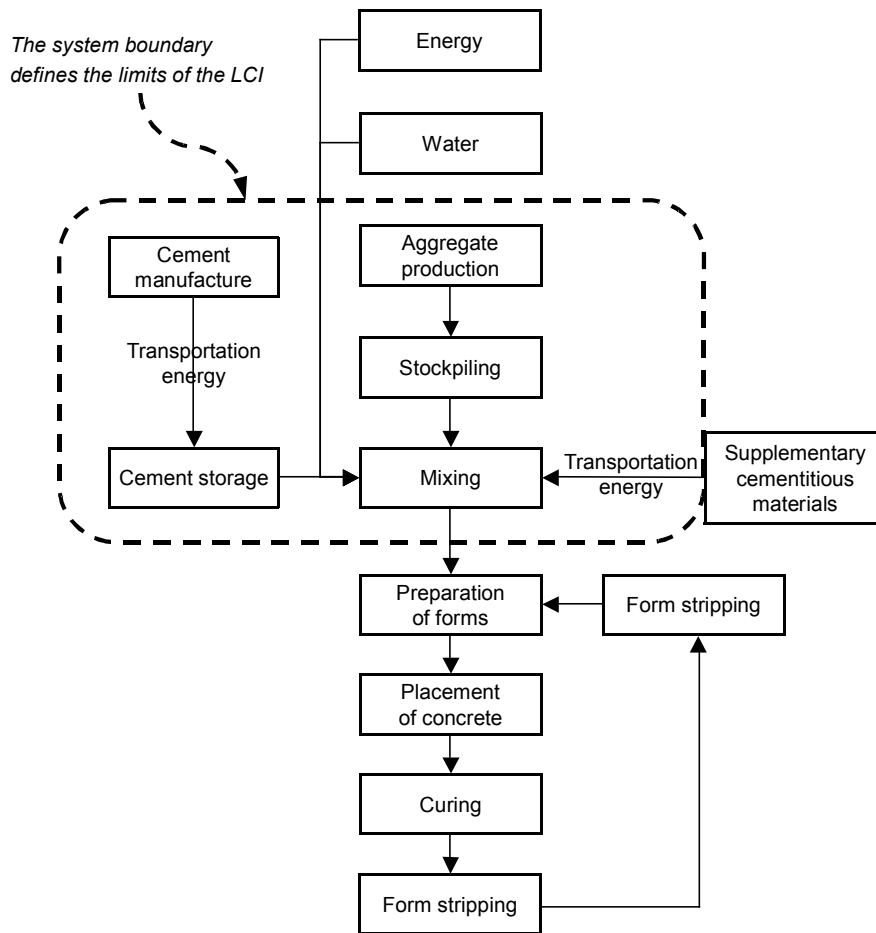


Figure 2 A full set of effects includes land use, resource use, climate change, health effects, acidification, and toxicity.

Concrete and Concrete Products LCI

The data gathered in an LCI are voluminous by nature and do not lend themselves well to concise summaries; that is the function of the LCA. The data in typical LCI reports are often grouped into three broad categories: materials, energy, and emissions. These LCI data do not include the upstream profiles of supplementary cementitious materials (such as fly ash, silica fume, or others) or energy sources (such as fuel and electricity).

Raw materials

Approximately 1.6 lb (0.73 kg) of raw materials, excluding water, are required to make 1 lb (0.45 kg) of cement.^{8,9} This is primarily due to the calcination of limestone. In addition to the mixture water, the LCI assumes that precast concrete consumes 17.5 gal./yd³ (85 L/m³) of water for washout of the mixer and equipment used to transfer

concrete to molds.

Solid waste from precast concrete plants is insignificant. Waste is about 2% of the mass of concrete used in production. About 95% of this waste is further beneficially reused through crushing and recycling, resulting in about 0.2 lb/ft³ (3 kg/m³) (about 0.1%) of actual waste.

Fuel and energy

The amount of energy required to manufacture or produce a product can be shown in units of energy, such as joules or BTU, or as amounts of fuel or electricity. Embodied energy per unit volume of concrete is primarily a function of the cement content of the mixture. For example, cement manufacturing accounts for about 80% of total energy in a 5000 psi (35 MPa) concrete. Energy used in operations at the concrete plant contributes close to 10%, while aggregate processing and transportation each contribute about 5%.

The embodied energy of a concrete mixture increases in direct proportion to its cement content. Therefore, the embodied energy of concrete is sensitive to the cement content of the mixture and to the assumptions about LCI energy data in cement manufacturing.

Replacing cement with supplementary cementitious materials, such as slag cement, fly ash, or silica fume, has the effect of lowering the embodied energy of the concrete. Fly ash, slag cement, and silica fume do not contribute to the energy and emissions embodied in the concrete (except for the small energy contributions due to slag granulation/grinding, which are included).¹⁰ These products are recovered materials from industrial processes (also called postindustrial recycled materials) and if not used in concrete would use up valuable landfill space. With a 50% slag cement replacement for portland cement in a 5000 psi (35 MPa) mixture, embodied energy drops from 2.3 to 1.5 GJ/m³ (1.7 to 1.1 MBTU/yd³), a 34% reduction. Fly ash or slag cement replacement of portland cement can also significantly reduce embodied emissions. For instance, a 45% carbon dioxide emissions reduction is achievable with 50% substitution of slag for portland cement in a 7500 psi (50 MPa) mixture. Certain aesthetic (color) and early-compressive-strength restrictions apply when using supplementary cementitious materials.

Embodied energy of reinforcing steel used in concrete is relatively small because it represents only about a 4% of the weight in a unit of concrete and it is manufactured mostly from recycled scrap metal. Reinforcing steel has over 90% recycled content, according to the Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute (www.crsi.org). The process for manufacturing reinforcing bars from recycled steel uses significant energy and should be considered if the reinforcing-bar content is more than 1% of the weight of the concrete.

It is assumed that at a typical site and in a precast concrete plant, concrete production formwork is reused a number of times through the repetitious nature of work, so its contribution to an LCI or LCA is negligible. Steel formwork is generally recycled at the end of its useful life.

When looking at a complicated product, such as an office building, the categories of fuel and energy consumed during the building's service life (construction, use, and end-of-life phases) are considered. Depending on the life span and energy efficiency of the building, the relative magnitude of energy attributed to operations can be quite large compared with the energy used to manufacture the components that comprise the building.

Emissions to air

The greatest amount of particulate matter (dust) comes from cement manufacturing and aggregate production. The single largest contributor to particulate emissions in both cement manufacturing and aggregate production is quarry operations (for example, blasting, haul roads, unloading, and stockpiling). In cement manufacture, quarry operations account for approximately 60% of total particulate emissions. In aggregate production, quarry operations are responsible for approximately 90% of particulate emissions. Approximately 30% of the particulate emissions associated with concrete production are from aggregate production and approximately 60% are embodied in the cement. However, particulate emissions from quarries are highly variable and sensitive to how dust is managed on haul roads and in other quarry operations.

The amounts of CO₂ and other combustion gases associated with concrete production are primarily a function of the cement content. Emissions of CO₂ increase in approximately a one-to-one ratio with the cement content of concrete. That is, for every additional pound of cement per cubic yard of concrete, there will be an increase in CO₂ emissions by approximately 1 lb (0.45 kg). Because of the CO₂ emissions from calcination and from fuel combustion in cement manufacture, the cement content of the concrete accounts for about 90% of the CO₂ emissions associated with concrete production. Thus, concrete LCI results are significantly influenced by the cement content of the concrete and the basis of the CO₂ data in the cement LCI.

The fact that cement manufacturing accounts for approximately 70% of fuel consumption per unit volume of concrete indicates that the amounts of combustion gases, sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and nitrous oxides (NO_x), are sensitive to cement content of the mixture.

Cement kiln dust is a waste product of the cement manufacturing process and can be used to help maintain soil fertility. An industry-weighted average of 94 lb of cement kiln dust is generated per ton (39 kg per metric tonne) of cement. Of this, about 75 lb (31 kg) are landfilled and about 19 lb (8 kg) are recycled in other operations.

Most emissions to air from the life cycle of an office building come from the use of heating and cooling equipment, not from the cement or concrete.

Life-Cycle Impact Assessment

In the next phase of LCA, the LCI data are assigned to impact categories and the relative effect of the inventory data within each impact category is weighted. Among LCA practitioners, this phase is called life-cycle impact assessment, and it consists of category definition, classification, and characterization. Category definition consists of identifying which impact categories are relevant to the product being studied. Classification consists of grouping related substances into impact categories. For example, the gases CO₂, methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O) contribute to climate change; therefore, they can be grouped together in an impact category called climate change. There are many impact categories to choose from. The categories chosen depend on the goal and scope of the LCA. **Table 2** lists some possible impact categories.

According to ISO 14044,¹¹ the only mandatory step in life-cycle impact assessment is characterization. In characterization, weighting factors are assigned according to a substance's relative contribution to the impact category.

Bulk waste	Global warming potential	Production capacity of drinking water
Carcinogens	Hazardous waste	Production capacity of irrigation water
Climate change	Human toxicity, air	Radiation
Crop growth capacity	Human toxicity, soil	Radioactive waste
Depletion of reserves	Human toxicity, water	Respiratory inorganics
Ecotoxicity soil, chronic	Land use	Respiratory organics
Ecotoxicity water, acute	Life expectancy	Severe morbidity and suffering
Ecotoxicity water, chronic	Morbidity	Severe nuisance
Eutrophication	Nuisance	Soil acidification
Fish and meat production	Ozone depletion	Species extinction
Fossil fuels	Photochemical smog	Wood growth capacity

Table 2 Some Impact Categories for Performing a Life-Cycle Assessment.

In terms of global warming potential, 1 lb of CH₄ is 20 times more potent than 1 lb of CO₂, and 1 lb of N₂O is 320 times more potent than 1 lb of CO₂. Therefore, in assessing the potential for global warming, CO₂ is assigned a weighting factor of 1, CH₄ a factor of 20, and N₂O a factor of 320. It is important to consider that there is no scientific basis for comparing across impact categories. For example, global warming potential cannot be compared with potential ozone depletion.

The methodology for life-cycle impact assessment is still being developed, and there is no general and widespread practice at this time or an agreement on specific methodologies. As a result, it is common to use several of the available methods to perform the life-cycle impact assessment.

Environmental Labeling

LCI and LCA are valid methods of assessing sustainability, but they are a complex accounting of the quantities and impacts of all materials, energy, emissions, and waste. Environmental labels, specifically environmental product declarations (EPDs), have gained popularity because they are easier to use than LCA reports to assess a products environmental impacts, yet they are based on LCA.

Environmental Product Declarations

An EPD is a Type III environmental label according to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). EPDs are created according to ISO 14025,¹² *Environmental labeling and declarations — Type III environmental declarations — Principles and procedures*, and, for building products, ISO 21930,¹³ *Building construction — Sustainability in building construction — Environmental declaration of building products*, also applies. EPDs are commonly likened to nutritional labels for food or material safety data sheets (MSDSs), except they list a set of pre-determined environmental impacts for a given unit (such as a cubic yard) of the product. These labels list environmental impacts, but they don't evaluate whether a product has a *better* or *worse* value in any given impact category.

EPDs present environmental information in a standardized format for a given product category. Environmental information contained in an EPD is either based on the results of an LCA or from data collected during an LCI. Environmental information presented due to the results of an LCA could include global warming potential, acidifica-

tion potential, eutrophication potential, or the like. Data collected during LCI and presented in an EPD includes primary energy use, amounts of waste produced, and others.

USGBC, Architecture 2030, retailers, architects, and designers are requesting EPDs because these labels are more useful than single-attribute criterion (recycled content, regional content, and biobased content) for assessing the sustainability of a product because they are LCA-based. It is important to realize, however, that EPDs can be prepared with a limited life cycle. There are two primary types of EPDs: business-to-business (B-to-B) and business-to-consumer (B-to-C).

B-to-B EPDs are frequently created for those products that are created without knowing how the product will be used during the life cycle. Think of a unit volume of concrete. One can create an EPD for a unit volume of concrete that takes into account all the energy, materials, and emissions related to the manufacture of the concrete. However, there are infinite possibilities for the use of that concrete once it leaves the plant gate. It could be used as a sidewalk, in a wall, as a bridge component, as a pavement, or many other applications. An EPD for a product like concrete or steel is typically in a B-to-B format. It accounts for all the environmental impacts from the cradle to the gate, but it does not include environmental impacts related to the use phase. Thus, B-to-B EPDs should not be used for comparisons among products.

B-to-C EPDs, alternatively, do account for all the environmental impacts for the full life cycle. These types of EPDs are typically created for products that have a known use in a building context. Think of products like carpet, windows, or doors. It is much easier to model the full LCA of these products because it is known how these products will be used in the structure.

Some of the most important guidance in these ISO standards relates to comparability of products and EPDs. Namely, EPDs should not be used to compare products (ISO 14025). The EPDs of two or more products are only comparable if:

- The LCA used to create the EPDs are of a cradle-to-grave scope.
- All products have the same function.
- All products are quantified by the same functional unit.
- The same product category rules were used to create the EPDs.
- They comply with all the requirements in ISO 14025, section 6.7.2.

Product Category Rules

Product category rules (PCR) serve two main purposes. First, PCR set how an LCA is performed to determine the environmental impacts for a given product category (such as precast concrete). This ensures consistency in procedures and interpretation of the commonly used LCA standards (ISO 14040 and ISO 14044). Second, a set of PCR establishes what environmental impacts and other information is reported in an EPD for a given product category. This ensures consistency in reporting.

In November 2012, the Carbon Leadership Forum (CLF) at the University of Washington released a U.S.-specific

PCR for concrete, which was revised in December 2013. Also in February 2013, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's (WBCSD)'s announced the development of a PCR for unreinforced concrete. These two PCRs were developed through the same ISO 14025-based process. Also following ISO 14025 and ISO 21930, the North American Precast Concrete Industry developed a specific PCR for precast concrete with ASTM International as the program operator.

PCRs are used to develop Type III environmental labels (EPDs) for B-to-B (e.g., cradle-to-gate) and business-to-consumer EPDs for building products and systems. Product category rules provide a set of specific requirements for developing EPDs, which include the guidelines and scope for performing LCI, LCA, and other related criteria. An EPD uses full LCA results to report an environmental footprint of a product. The EPD reports results according to ISO standards and specific PCR.

PCRs can be used by the industry as well as by individual product manufacturers. The development of EPDs and PCR by non-governmental organizations (NGO) for some concrete constituents is nearing completion in Europe. Competing industries in the United States are also developing their PCR and EPDs.

Green Building Codes and Standards

In the beginning of the green-building movement, municipalities and government agencies looked for ways to mandate green building practices in their jurisdictions. Initial attempts to mandate the use of green building rating systems were difficult to enforce. Thus, green building codes and standards, written in mandatory language, emerged.

International Green Construction Code

Development of the International Green Construction Code (IgCC) began in 2009 led by the International Code Council (ICC) and with the following co-sponsors: the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC); the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IES); the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE); ASTM International; and the American Institute of Architects (AIA). According to the IgCC, it is "a model code that provides minimum requirements to safeguard the environment, public health, safety and general welfare through the establishment of requirements that are intended to reduce the negative impacts and increase the positive impacts of the built environment on the natural environment and building occupants."

Because the IgCC is one of the ICC's I-codes, it was developed through the same process (two sets of public hearings) and it has similar attributes to other codes. The initial IgCC was released in 2012, and the second edition was released in 2015.¹⁴ The 2015 edition of the IgCC will be discussed here.

Scope

Chapters 1 and 2 address administration and definitions, and all text is written in code-mandatory language. Remaining chapters focus on topics such as:

- Jurisdictional requirements and life cycle assessment

- Site development and land use
- Material resource conservation and efficiency
- Energy conservation, efficiency and CO₂e emission reduction
- Water resource conservation, quality and efficiency
- Indoor environmental quality and comfort
- Commissioning, operation and maintenance

The prescriptive requirements related to Material Resource Conservation and Efficiency and contained in Chapter 5 of the IgCC (Table 3). If the project team chooses to perform an LCA according to Chapter 3 (Section 303) of the IgCC, however, it does not have to comply with Section 505 of the IgCC. Chapter 5 and Section 303 of the IgCC will be explained in more detail in the following sections.

Whole Building Life Cycle Assessment

Section 303 of the IgCC lists the requirements for performing a whole building LCA according to the IgCC. If a whole building LCA is performed, “compliance with Section 505 shall not be required.” The performance option for the materials section requires performance of a life-cycle assessment (LCA) conforming to ISO 14044.¹¹ To meet the conditions of this section, an LCA is conducted on two building alternatives (minimum) that have the same reference design. Building alternatives must meet all minimum energy requirements of the IgCC, and also meet the structural requirements of the International Building Code. The default reference service life used for modeling is contained in ASTM E2921-13 and is set at 75 years.¹⁵ Buildings must be modeled using a full LCA for the full life of the building.

To meet the requirements of this section, a 20% improvement has to be made in the global warming potential and a minimum of two of the following impact measures: acidification potential, eutrophication potential, ozone depletion potential, smog potential, and primary energy use.

Other requirements are to conduct the LCA including:

- Operational energy use, and optionally including building process loads,
- Maintenance and replacement schedules for components, and
- The complete building envelope, structural elements, and interior walls, floors, and ceilings, including interior and exterior finishes.

The assessment for both buildings must be conducted with the same LCA tool, and that tool must be approved by the code official.

IgCC Chapter 5

502	Construction Material Management	
502.1.1	Storage and handling of materials	Materials must be handled and stored according to manufacturer's instructions.
502.1.2	Construction phase moisture control	Materials subject to moisture damage must be protected during construction.
503	Construction Waste Management	
503.1	Construction Waste Management Plan	At least 50% of nonhazardous waste must be diverted from disposal.
504	Waste Management and Recycling	
504.1	Recycling areas for waste generated post certificate of occupancy	Must provide areas for the collection of recyclables.
504.2	Storage of lamps, batteries and electronics	Must provide areas for the collection of lamps, batteries, electronics, and other special-disposal items.
505	Material Selection	
505.1	Material selection and properties	Building materials must comply with 505.2 or 505.3
505.2	Material selection	55% or more of total building materials must be used materials and components; recycled content building materials; recyclable building materials and building components; bio-based materials; or indigenous materials.
505.3	Multi-attribute material declaration and certification	55% or more of total building materials must have a Type III environmental product declaration or be verified to a multi-attribute standard.
506	Lamps	
506.1	Low mercury lamps	Mercury content must comply with 506.2 or 506.3
506.2	Straight fluorescent lamps	Mercury content must be less than 5 mg
506.3	Compact fluorescent lamps	Mercury content must be less than 5 mg and lamps must be listed and labeled according to UL 1993
507	Building Envelope Moisture Control	
507.1	Moisture control prevention measures	Inspect moisture preventative measures for foundation sub-soil drainage systems, waterproofing, and dampproofing; under-slab water vapor protection; flashings; exterior wall coverings; and roof coverings, drainage, and flashings.

Table 3 Material Resource Conservation and Efficiency

ASHRAE Standard 189.1

Developed jointly by ASHRAE, USGBC, and IESNA, the first edition of the ANSI/ASHRAE/USGBC/IESNA Standard 189.1 *Standard for the Design of High-Performance Green Buildings Except Low-Rise Residential Buildings* was published in 2009.¹⁶ At that time, it was the first U.S. standard written in code-intended language on the topic of green construction. The goal of the committee was to create a standard that could be adopted by state and local jurisdictions to reduce the environmental impact of buildings. Because Standard 189.1 is written in code-intended language, it contains minimum performance requirements to ensure a high-performance green building. ASHRAE 189.1 was updated in 2011, and again in 2014, and the 2014 version of the standard will be explained here.

Scope

ASHRAE 189.1 contains requirements in five broad areas: Site Sustainability; Water Use Efficiency; Energy Efficiency; Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ); and The Building's Impact on the Atmosphere, Materials, and Resources. It also includes a section on Construction and Plans for Operation. Each of these topics is a separate chapter, and each includes the following sections: general, compliance paths, mandatory provisions, prescriptive options, and performance options.

Mandatory provisions in each chapter contain those requirements that must be met on all projects. Each chapter then contains prescriptive and performance options (the two compliance paths), and the project must meet requirements in one or the other of these sections. In general, the prescriptive option allows for simpler showing of compliance, and the performance option is more involved.

The Building's Impact on the Atmosphere, Materials, and Resources

Table 4 lists the mandatory provisions related to the section on the building's impact on the atmosphere, materials, and resources. **Table 5** lists the prescriptive provisions related to the section on the building's impact on the atmosphere, materials, and resources.

9.3	Mandatory Provisions	
9.3.1	Construction waste management	
9.3.1.1	Diversion	At least 50% of nonhazardous waste must be recycled or reused, thus diverting it from landfills and incinerators.
9.3.1.2	Total waste	A maximum of 42 yd ³ or 12,000 lb of waste, per 10,000 ft ² of new floor area, is allowed (35 m ³ or 6000 kg of waste per 1000 m ²).
9.3.2	Extracting, harvesting, and/or manufacturing	Extracting, harvesting, or manufacturing of materials, products, or assemblies must conform to the "laws and regulations of the country of origin." ¹⁶
9.3.3	Refrigerants	Heating, ventilating, air conditioning, and refrigerating systems shall not use chlorofluorocarbon (CFC)-based refrigerants.
9.3.4	Storage and collection of recyclables and discarded goods	
9.3.4.1	Recycleables	There must be a dedicated recycling area that accepts metal, glass, corrugate cardboard, plastic, and paper
9.3.4.2	Reusable goods	If the building has residential space, it must have a designated area to store donation items for charitable organizations.
9.3.4.3	Fluorescent and HID lamps and ballasts	There must be a dedicated collection area for fluorescent and HID lamps and ballasts.

Table 4 ASHRAE 189.1 mandatory provisions related to atmosphere, materials, and resources

9.4	Prescriptive Option	
9.4.1	Reduced impact materials	Materials used in the building must comply with 9.4.1.1, 9.4.1.2, or* 9.4.1.3. Like with many green guidelines, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, and elevator equipment are exempt from these requirements, as are any materials that aren't permanently installed. Also, the cost of materials is allowed to be assumed as 45% of total construction cost.
9.4.1.1	Recycled content	Total cost of post-consumer recycled content and one-half preconsumer recycled content must be 10% of total building-material cost." Constituent materials in concrete... are allowed to be treated as separate components and calculated separately." ¹⁶
9.4.1.2	Regional materials	Based on cost, 15% of materials need to be manufactured, extracted, harvested, or* recovered within 500 mi of the project site. Percentages are allowed if only a portion of a material meets the 500 mi criterion. There is a notable exception to this requirement that is different from many green guidelines. Longer distances are allowed (up to 2000 mi) when products are shipped by rail or water.
9.4.1.3	Biobased products	"A minimum of 5% of building materials used, based on cost, shall be biobased products." ¹⁶

*Note that this requirement is "or" not "and."

Table 5 ASHRAE 189.1 prescriptive provisions related to atmosphere, materials, and resources

ASHRAE 189.1 Performance Option

The performance option for the materials section requires performance of a life-cycle assessment (LCA) conforming to ISO 14044.¹¹ To meet the conditions of this section, an LCA is conducted on two building alternatives (minimum) that meet the owner's project requirements. Building alternatives must meet all requirements of the authority having jurisdiction, and also meet the requirements of ASHRAE 189.1 sections 6, 7, and 8. Table 10.2.3.2 in ASHRAE 189.1 includes service lives used for modeling.¹⁶ Buildings must be modeled using a full LCA for the full life of the building. Energy consumption during operation does not need to be included as part of the LCA model, but it is allowed to be included as an option.

To meet the performance path, a 5% improvement has to be made in a minimum of two impact categories. Accepted impact categories include: acidification, climate change, ecotoxicity, human health effects, land use (habitat alteration), ozone layer depletion, resource use, and smog.

Another requirement of the performance path is to conduct the LCA with minimum steps listed in section 9.5.1.2, Procedure. The three mandatory steps include:

1. Perform an LCI
2. Prepare a report (according to ISO 14044 requirements for third-party reporting) that compares the alternatives "using a published third-party impact indicator method that includes, at a minimum, the impact categories listed in section 9.5.1.1."¹⁶

3. Have the LCA report reviewed by an external expert.

Once completed, the project team must submit the LCA report and proof of third-party critical review to the authority having jurisdiction.

Green Building Rating Systems

Green building rating systems have gained popularity because they are comparatively easy to use and straightforward. Focus groups have shown that consumers are interested in furthering sustainability but are unable to define it. Labeling a green building with LEED, Energy Star, or Green Globes certification sends the message the building is green without having to perform a complex LCI or LCA.

LEED

The newest product released by the USGBC to assess levels of sustainability is version 4 of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system, called simply LEED v4. This version of the rating system is very different than previous versions. The LEED green building rating system is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. LEED is both a *standard* for certification and a *design guide* for sustainable construction and operation. As a standard, it is predominantly performance-based, and as a design guide, it takes a whole-building approach that encourages a collaborative, integrated design and construction process. LEED is administered by the USGBC. LEED v4¹² has six versions: Building Design and Construction (BD+C), Interior Design and Construction, Existing Buildings, Operations and Maintenance, Homes, and Neighborhood Development. This section will focus on LEED v4 for Building Design and Construction (BD+C), which includes New Construction, Core & Shell, Schools, Retail, Data Centers, Warehouses and Distribution Centers, Hospitality, and Healthcare.

Essentially, LEED is a point-based system that *provides a framework for assessing building performance meeting sustainability goals*. Points are awarded when a specific intent is met, and a building is LEED certified if it obtains at least 40 points out of a total availability of 110 points (LEED-NC). The points are grouped into nine categories:

- Integrative Process
- Location and Transportation (LT)
- Sustainable Sites (SS),
- Water Efficiency (WE),
- Energy and Atmosphere (EA),
- Materials and Resources (MR),
- Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ),
- Innovation (IN), and
- Regional Priority (RP).

The more points earned, the lesser the environmental impact of the building. Silver, gold, and platinum ratings are awarded for at least 50, 60, and 80 points, respectively.

Points must be documented according to LEED procedures to be earned. The USGBC website contains a downloadable letter template that greatly simplifies the documentation requirements for LEED.

The buildings in the corporate campus for CH2M Hill in Englewood, Colo., are framed with a total precast concrete system, including precast concrete shearwalls, double-tees, inverted-tee beams, and load-bearing exterior walls (**Fig. 3**). The buildings are some of the first LEED-certified total precast concrete office buildings.



Figure 3 All three total precast buildings are LEED certified. CH2M Hill World Headquarters, Englewood, Colo.; Architect: Barber Architecture. (Courtesy Barber Architecture)

The Arizona Departments of Administration and Environmental Quality (ADOA & ADEQ) project is a 500,000 ft² (46,450 m²), single-contract project consisting of two architectural precast concrete-clad office buildings and two precast/prestressed concrete parking structures (**Fig. 4**). The Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) is a 185,000 ft² (17,187 m²), four-story office building with an 800-space parking structure. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) is a six-story, 300,000 ft² (27,870 m²) office building with a 1000-space parking structure. Both buildings are registered with LEED.

The 27-story LEED platinum certified existing office building in downtown Sacramento, Calif., has precast concrete panels with punched openings (**Fig. 5**). The windows were premounted, glazed, and caulked at the plant after



Figure 4 Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), Phoenix, Ariz., Architect: Opus Architects and Engineers, (Photos: Alex Stricker, Stricker LLC)



Figure 5 First LEED platinum certified existing high-rise. The Joe Serna Jr. California EPA Headquarters, Sacramento, Calif.; Architect: A. C. Martin Partners.



Figure 6 LEED registered mixed-use development. Bookends, Greenville, S.C.; Architect: Johnston Design Group, LLC. (Courtesy Johnston Design Group LLC)

casting. The precast concrete panels on the south and west sides of the building have integral sun shades with a 3 ft (1 m) overhang. The building's sustainable features can be grouped into three general categories: air quality, energy conservation and management, and recycling and recycled products.

The project in **Fig. 6** is a USGBC LEED v2.2-registered mixed-use development featuring street-level retail and residential condominiums. The structure's framing consists of 7 in. (175 mm) and 12 in. (300 mm) load-bearing walls, which support double-tees and flat slabs. The precast concrete walls have a combination of sandblasted and cast-in thin-brick finishes. The facade of this one building has four distinct architectural styles to appear as four separate and unique buildings. Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) accessories, such as conduit boxes, and mechanical

and electrical embeds and openings were cast integrally into the panels.

Energy Star

Energy Star (www.energystar.gov) is a government/industry partnership designed to help businesses and consumers protect the environment and save money through energy efficiency. Energy Star labeling is available for office equipment such as computers and monitors, appliances such as refrigerators, and residential and commercial buildings. Buildings that meet certain criteria and achieve a rating of 75 or better in the Energy Star program are eligible to apply for the Energy Star. The rating consists of a score on a scale of 1 to 100. The score represents a benchmark energy performance. For example, buildings that score 75 or greater are among the United States'

top 25%. In addition, buildings must maintain a healthy and productive indoor environment.

At the present time, five commercial-building types are eligible for the Energy Star certification:

- offices,
- K–12 schools,
- supermarket/grocery stores,
- hotel/motels, and
- acute care/children's hospitals.

These building types are broken down further into a number of specific occupancies. For example, office buildings include general office, bank branch, courthouse, and financial center.

Demonstrating conformance is accomplished through a web-based software tool called Portfolio Manager. The program hinges on the unbiased opinions of a Professional Engineer who must visit the building and verify that data entered about the building are correct.

Through the Portfolio Manager, the engineer inputs the building location and energy consumption and describes its physical and operating characteristics. Operating characteristics include such things as average weekly occupancy hours; number of occupants; and number and types of equipment, such as personal computers, refrigeration cases, cooking facilities, and laundry facilities. Energy consumption is based on all sources of energy used per month. In addition to energy performance, the engineer is responsible for demonstrating compliance with industry standards on thermal comfort, indoor air quality, and illumination.

The Professional Engineer assessing the building is expected to give an opinion about the capability of the building to provide acceptable thermal environmental conditions per ASHRAE Standard 55¹⁸ and its capability to supply acceptable outdoor air per ASHRAE Standard 62.¹⁹ The engineer is also expected to give an opinion about the capability of the building to provide minimum illumination levels per the Illuminance Selection Procedure in the IESNA Lighting Handbook.²⁰

In addition, Portfolio Manager has the capability to manage energy data, analyze trends in energy performance (to make budget and management decisions regarding investments in energy-related projects), verify building performance, and track the progress of building improvements.

Green Globes

Green Globes is an online, point-based green building rating system administered by the Green Building Initiative (www.thegbi.org). Many of the credits are similar to those in LEED, though the point structure differs; Green Globes has 1000 total points compared with the 110 for LEED-NC. Certification for Green Globes is available at 35% achievement of the total applicable points compared with LEED at 40% (40 points). This Designer's Notebook henceforth focuses on the LEED v4 system in lieu of other systems such as Green Globes.

Durability

A key factor in building reuse is the durability of the original structure. Precast concrete components provide a long service life due to their durable and low-maintenance concrete surfaces. A precast concrete shell can be left in place when the building interior is renovated. Annual maintenance should include inspection and, if necessary, repair of sealant material. Modular and sandwich panel construction with concrete exterior and interior walls provides long-term durability inside and out. Precast concrete construction provides the opportunity to refurbish the building should the building use or function change, rather than tear it down and start anew. These characteristics of precast concrete make it sustainable in two ways: it avoids contributing solid waste to landfills and it reduces the depletion of natural resources and production of air and water pollution caused by new construction.

LEED v4 Materials and Resources Credit 1 on Building Life-Cycle Impact Reduction. *The purpose of this credit is to conserve resources and reduce wastes and environmental effects of new construction. The building shell includes the exterior skin and framing but excludes window assemblies, interior partition walls, floor coverings, and ceiling systems. Option 3 of this credit should be obtainable when renovating buildings with a precast concrete facade, because concrete generally has a long life. This is worth 2 points if 25% of the existing building structure/shell is reused, 3 points if 50% is reused, and 4 points if 75%. For Option 4, Whole Building Life-Cycle Assessment, a minimum of 10% reduction in at least three of six impact categories compared to a reference building must be demonstrated. A whole-building LCA must be performed on the structure and enclosure of a reference building and on that of the proposed project building. The LCA must conform to ISO 14044, and a minimum service life of 60 years must be modeled.*

The 10% reduction must be shown in global warming potential (in kg CO₂e) and two of the following five impact categories for 3 points:

- *Depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer in kg CFC-11*
- *Acidification of land and water sources in moles H⁺ or kg SO₂*
- *Eutrophication in kg N or kg Phosphate*
- *Formation of tropospheric ozone in kg NO_x or kg Ethene*
- *Depletion of non-renewable energy resources in MJ*

LEED v4 Materials and Resources Credit 2 on Building Product Disclosure and Optimization—Environmental Product Declarations. *The purpose of this credit is to use materials and products for which life-cycle information is available. Two options are available: environmental product declaration (EPD) and multi-attribute optimization. In the first method of compliance, the project team must use 20 permanently installed products—sourced from at least 5 different manufacturers—that:*

- *Have a product-specific declaration,*
- *Have an industry-wide (generic) EPD,*
- *Have a product-specific Type III EPD, or*
- *Conform to a USGBC-approved program.*

For the purpose of calculations, products are valued based on the stringency of the declaration as such:

- *Products with a product-specific declaration are valued at ¼ of a product*
- *Products with an industry-wide (generic) EPD are valued at ½ of a product*
- *Products with a product-specific Type III EPD are valued as a whole product*

For Option 2, 50% of the value of permanently installed products (by cost) must have:

- *Extended producer responsibility, or*
- *Reduced environmental impact (per USGBC program).*

The extended producer responsibility alternative values products at 50% of their cost. USGBC-approved programs for the reduced environment impact alternative of Option 2 are currently listed as those certification programs that verify impact reduction (below industry average) of products in three of the following categories:

- *Global warming potential,*
- *Depletion of stratospheric ozone,*
- *Acidification,*
- *Eutrophication,*
- *Formation of tropospheric ozone, or*
- *Depletion of nonrenewable energy sources.*

Products used to meet the criteria are also valued according to source. Values are:

- *Products sourced within 100 miles of the project site are valued at 200% of their cost.*
- *Products sourced domestically within 500 miles of the project site are valued at 150% of their cost.*

Corrosion resistance

The inherent alkalinity of concrete results in a system of concrete and reinforcing steel that does not corrode in most environments. The most common reason for surface spalling of concrete in buildings is corrosion of reinforcing steel due to inadequate concrete cover. Precast concrete offers increased resistance to this type of spalling due to its denser concrete and because reinforcement and concrete are placed in a plant, with more quality control than site-cast or cast-in-place concrete construction. This reduces variations in concrete cover over reinforcing steel and reduces the likelihood of inadequate cover.

Inedible

Vermin and insects cannot destroy concrete because it is inedible. Some softer construction materials are inedible but still provide pathways for insects. Due to its hardness, vermin and insects will not bore through concrete.

Resiliency

Concrete is resistant to wind, hurricanes, floods, and fire. Properly designed precast concrete is resistant to earthquakes and provides blast protection for occupants.

Fire resistance

Precast concrete offers noncombustible construction that helps contain a fire within boundaries. As a separation wall, precast concrete helps to prevent a fire from spreading throughout a building or jumping from building to building. During wild fires, precast concrete walls help provide protection to human life and the occupants' possessions. As an exterior wall, concrete that endures a fire can often be reused when the building is rebuilt.

The fire endurance of concrete can be determined based on its thickness and type of aggregate. Procedures for determining fire endurance of building materials are prescribed by ASTM E119.15 Concrete element fire endurance is generally controlled by heat transmission long before structural failure, whereas other construction materials fail by heat transmission when collapse is imminent. A two-hour fire endurance for a precast concrete wall will most likely mean the wall becomes hot (experiences an average temperature rise of 250°F [140°C] or 325°F [180°C] at any one point), whereas a two-hour fire endurance of a wood-frame wall means the wall is likely near collapse. Concrete helps contain a fire even if no water supply is available, whereas sprinklers rely on a potentially problematic water source.

Tornado, hurricane, and wind resistance

Precast concrete can be economically designed to resist tornadoes, hurricanes, and wind. Hurricanes are prevalent in coastal regions. Tornadoes are particularly prevalent in the path of hurricanes and in the central plains of the U.S.

Case Study: In 1967, a series of deadly tornadoes hit northern Illinois. Damages at the time were estimated at \$50 million, and 57 people were killed and 484 homes were destroyed. Two precast/prestressed concrete structures, a

grocery store and a high school, were in the direct path of two of the tornadoes, which struck almost simultaneously. Repairs to the structural system of the grocery store (limited to a single crack in the flanges and stem of a beam subjected to uplift) were less than \$200. In the high school, structural damage was limited to the flange of one double-tee member (24 ft [7.5 m] of which was broken off by flying debris) and damaged concrete diaphragm end closures.

Flood resistance

Concrete is not damaged by water; concrete that does not dry out continues to gain strength in the presence of moisture. Concrete submerged in water absorbs very small amounts of water even over long periods of time, and this water does not damage the concrete. Conversely, building materials such as wood and gypsum wallboard can absorb large quantities of water and cause moisture-related problems. In flood-damaged areas, the concrete buildings are often salvageable.

Concrete will only contribute to moisture problems in buildings if it is enclosed in a building system that does not let it dry out, trapping moisture between the concrete and other building materials. For instance, impermeable vinyl wall coverings in hot and humid climates will act as a vapor retarder and moisture can get trapped between the concrete and wall covering. For this reason, impermeable wall coverings (such as vinyl wallpaper) should not be used in hot and humid climates.

Earthquake resistance

Precast concrete can be designed to be resistant to earthquakes. Earthquakes in Guam, United States (Richter scale 8.1); Manila, Philippines (Richter scale 7.2); and Kobe, Japan (Richter scale 6.9), have subjected precast concrete buildings to some of nature's deadliest forces. Appropriately designed precast concrete framing systems have a proven capability to withstand these major earthquakes.

Case study: The 1994 earthquake in Northridge, Calif. (Richter scale 6.8), was one of the costliest natural disasters in U.S. history. Total damage was estimated at \$20 billion. Most engineered structures within the affected region performed well, including structures with precast concrete components. In particular, no damage was observed in precast concrete cladding due to either inadequacies of those components, or inadequacies of their connections to the buildings' structural systems, and no damage was observed in the precast concrete components used for the first floor or first-floor support of residential housing. It should be noted that parking structures with large footprint areas—regardless of structural system—did not perform as well as other types of buildings, but in the case of precast concrete construction, it has been shown that properly designed diaphragms would have mitigated the damage.

Weather Resistance

High humidity and wind-driven rain

Precast concrete is resistant to wind-driven rain and moist, outdoor air in hot and humid climates. Concrete is impermeable to air infiltration and wind-driven rain. Moisture that enters a precast concrete building must come

through joints between precast concrete elements. Annual inspection and repair of joints will minimize this potential. More importantly, if moisture does enter through joints, it will not damage the concrete.

Good practice for all types of wall construction is to use permeable materials that breathe (are allowed to dry) on at least one surface and not encapsulate concrete between two impermeable surfaces. Concrete breathes and will dry out. Therefore, as long as a precast concrete wall is allowed to breathe on at least one side and is not covered by an impermeable material on both wall surfaces, the potential for moisture problems within the wall system is minimal.

More information on condensation potential, and moisture and mold control in precast concrete walls is covered in Designer's Notebook *Energy Conservation and Condensation Control (DN-15)* and *Designer's Notebook Avoidance of Mold (DN-17)*.^{22,23}

Ultraviolet resistance

The ultraviolet (UV) range of solar radiation does not harm concrete. Using nonfading colored pigments in concrete retains the color in concrete long after paints have faded due to the sun's effects. Precast concrete is ideal for using pigments because the controlled production allows for replication of color for all components for a project (Fig. 3 and 4).

Mitigating the Urban Heat-Island Effect

Precast concrete provides reflective surfaces that minimize the urban heat-island effect, which causes cities and urban areas to be 3 °F to 8 °F (2 °C to 4 °C) warmer than surrounding areas. This difference is attributed to heat absorption of buildings and pavements that have taken the place of vegetation. Trees provide shade that reduces temperatures at the surface. Trees and plants provide transpiration and evaporation that cool the surfaces and air surrounding them. Research has shown that the average temperature of Los Angeles, Calif., has risen steadily over the past half century, and is now 6 °F to 7 °F (3 °C to 4 °C) warmer than 50 years ago.²⁴

Warmer surface temperatures

Urban heat islands are primarily attributed to horizontal surfaces, such as roofs and pavements, that absorb solar radiation. In this context, pavements include roads, streets, parking lots, driveways, and walkways. Vertical surfaces, such as the sides of buildings, also contribute to this effect. Using materials with higher albedos (solar



Figure 7 High-reflecting (usually light-colored) surfaces help mitigate urban heat islands. Cape Coral City Hall, Cape Coral, Fla.; Architect: Spillis Candela/DMJM. (Courtesy Spillis Candela DMJM)

reflectance values), such as concrete, will reduce the heat-island effect, save energy by reducing the demand for air conditioning, and improve air quality (**Fig. 7**).

Studies indicate that people will avoid using air conditioning at night if temperatures are less than 75 °F (24 °C). Mitigating the urban heat-island effect to keep summer temperatures in cities less than 75 °F at night has the potential to save large amounts of energy by avoiding air-conditioning use.

Smog

Smog levels have also been correlated to temperature rise. Thus, as the temperature of urban areas increases, so does the probability of smog and pollution. In Los Angeles, the probability of smog increases by 3% with every degree Fahrenheit of temperature rise. Studies for Los Angeles and 13 cities in Texas have found that there are almost never any smog episodes when the temperature is below 70 °F (21 °C). The probability of episodes begins at about 73 °F (23 °C) and, for Los Angeles, exceeds 50% by 90 °F (32 °C). Reducing the daily high in Los Angeles by 7 °F (4 °C) is estimated to eliminate two-thirds of the smog episodes.

Smog and air pollution are the main reasons EPA mandates expensive, clean fuels for vehicles and reduced particulate emissions from industrial facilities such as cement and asphalt production plants. The EPA now recognizes that air temperature is as much a contributor to smog as nitrogen oxide (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The effort to reduce particulates in the industrial sector alone costs billions of dollars per year, whereas reduction in smog may be directly related to the reflectance and colors of the infrastructure that surround us. Installing high-albedo roofs, walls, and pavements is a cost-effective way to reduce smog.

Albedo (solar reflectance)

Albedo, which in this case is synonymous with solar reflectance, is the ratio of the amount of solar radiation reflected from a material surface to the amount shining on the surface. Solar radiation includes the ultraviolet as well as the visible spectrum. Albedo is measured on a scale from not reflective (0.0) to 100% reflective (1.0). Generally, materials that appear to be light-colored in the visible spectrum have high albedo and those that appear dark-colored have low albedo. However, because reflectivity in the solar radiation spectrum determines albedo, color in the visible spectrum is not always a true indicator of albedo.

Surfaces with lower albedos absorb more solar radiation. The ability to reflect infrared light is of great importance because infrared light is most responsible for heating. On a sunny day when the air temperature is 55 °F (13 °C), surfaces with dark acrylic paint will heat up to 90 °F (32 °C) more than air temperatures, to 145 °F (63 °C). Light surfaces, such as white acrylic, will heat up to 20 °F (11 °C) more, to a temperature of 75 °F (24 °C). The color and composition of the materials greatly affect the surface temperature and the amount of absorbed solar radiation. The effect of albedo and solar radiation on surface temperatures is referred to as the sol-air temperature and can be calculated.

Traditional portland cement concrete generally has an albedo or solar reflectance of approximately 0.4, although values can vary; measured values are reported in the range of 0.4 to 0.5. The solar reflectance of new concrete is greater when the surface reflectance of the sand and cementitious materials in the concrete are greater. Surface finishing techniques also have an effect, with smoother surfaces generally having a higher

albedo. For concrete elements with white portland cement, values are reported in the range of 0.7 to 0.8. Albedo is most commonly measured using a solar-spectrum reflectometer (ASTM C1549)²⁴ or a pyranometer (ASTM E1918).²⁶

Emittance

In addition to albedo, the material's surface emittance affects surface temperature. While albedo is a measure of the solar radiation reflected away from the surface, surface emittance is the ability of the material to emit, or let go of, heat. A white surface exposed to the sun is relatively cool because it has a high reflectivity and a high emittance. A shiny metal surface is relatively warm because it has a low emittance, even though it has a high albedo. The emittance of most nonreflecting (nonmetal) building surfaces such as concrete is in the range of 0.85 to 0.95. The emittance of aluminum foil, aluminum sheet, and galvanized steel, all dry and bright, are 0.05, 0.12, and 0.25, respectively.

Moisture

Moisture in concrete helps to cool the surface by evaporation. Concrete when placed has a moisture content of 100% relative humidity. The concrete surface gradually dries over a period of one to two years to reach equilibrium with its surroundings. Concrete surfaces exposed to rain and snow will continue to be wetted and dried. This moisture in the concrete surface will help to cool the concrete by evaporation whenever the vapor pressure of the moisture in the surface is greater than that of the air. In simpler terms, when the temperature and relative humidity of the air are greater than that just beneath the concrete surface, the concrete will dry and cool somewhat by evaporation.

The albedo of concrete decreases when the surface is wet. Consequently, albedo is lower when concrete is relatively new and the surface has not yet dried, and when the concrete becomes wet. The albedo of new concrete generally stabilizes within two to three months.

LEED v4 Sustainable Sites Credit 5 on Heat Island Reduction. *The intent of this credit is to reduce heat islands. The requirements are met by placing a minimum of 75% of parking places underground or covered by a parking structure. Precast concrete parking structures, can be used to help obtain this point. Any roof used to shade or cover parking must meet specified criteria, such as having a solar reflectance index (SRI) of at least 39.²⁷ This credit is worth 2 points. For more information on concrete's SRI, see the credit interpretation ruling section of this document.*

Mitigation approaches

One method to reduce the urban heat-island effect is to change the albedo of the urban area. This is accomplished by replacing low-albedo surfaces with materials of higher albedo. This change is most cost effective when done in the initial design or during renovation or replacement due to other needs. Planting trees for shade near buildings also helps mitigate the urban heat-island effect. Shade also directly reduces the air-conditioning load on buildings. Using deciduous trees shades the buildings in the summer and allows the sun to reach the buildings in the winter.

Thermal mass and nocturnal effects

The *thermal mass* of concrete delays the time it takes for a surface to heat up but also delays the time to cool off. For example, a white nonconcrete roof will get warm faster than concrete during the day, but will also cool off faster at night. Concrete surfaces are often warmer than air temperatures in the evening hours. Concrete's albedo and thermal mass will help mitigate heat-island effects during the day but may contribute to the nocturnal heat-island effect. The moisture absorbed by concrete during rain events helps reduce the daytime and nocturnal heat-island effect when it evaporates. The challenge is to use concrete to mitigate heat islands while keeping evening temperatures as cool as possible.

Environmental Protection

Radiation and toxicity

One goal of sustainability is to reduce radiation and toxic materials; concrete provides an effective barrier against radiation and can be used to isolate toxic chemicals and waste materials. Concrete protects against the harmful effects of x-rays, gamma rays, and neutron radiation. Special aggregates are often used in concrete that is employed as a radiation shield.

Concrete is resistant to most natural environments; it is sometimes exposed to substances that can attack and cause deterioration. Concrete in some chemical manufacturing and storage facilities must be specifically designed to avoid chemical attack. The resistance of concrete to chlorides is good, and using less-permeable concrete can increase the resistance even more. This is achieved by using a low water-to-cementitious materials ratio (around 0.35), adequate curing, and supplementary cementitious materials such as slag cement or silica fume. The best defenses against sulfate attack where this is an issue are using less-permeable concrete and using cement specially formulated for sulfate environments. In harsher environments, the concrete can be cast with an applied coating or liner for more protection.

Resistance to noise

Precast concrete walls provide a buffer between outdoor noise and the indoor environment. Because land is becoming scarcer, buildings are being constructed closer together and near noise sources such as highways, railways, and airports. The greater mass of concrete walls can reduce sound penetrating through a wall. An 8-in.-thick (200 mm) flat wall panel (95 lb/ft² [4.5 kPa]) has a sound transmission coefficient (STC) of 58 and outdoor-indoor transmission class (OITC) of 50. For floors, an 8-in.-thick hollow-core with a carpet and pad (58 lb/ft² [2.8 kPa]) has an STC of 50 with an impact insulation class (IIC) of 73.22

Precast concrete panels also provide effective sound barriers, separating buildings from highways or industrial areas from residential areas.

LEED v4 Materials and Resources Credit 4 on Building Product Disclosure and Optimization—Material Ingredients. *The purpose of this credit is to address human toxicity. There are three options for this credit: Material Ingredient Reporting, Material Ingredient Optimization, and Supply Chain Optimization.*

The (Material Ingredient Reporting) option requires the use 20 permanently installed products—sourced from at least 5 different manufacturers—that comply with any of the following chemical-inventory programs:

- *Manufacturer Inventory – basically an inventory of all ingredients,*
- *Health Product Declaration (HPD) – product must have and HPD with full disclosure of known hazards in compliance with the HPD Collaborative standard,^b*
- *Cradle to Cradle – product must be certified to the Cradle to Cradle v2 Basic Level or the Cradle to Cradle v3 Bronze Level,^c or*
- *USGBC-approved program.*

Products must have chemicals inventoried to 1000 ppm.

For Option 2 (Material Ingredient Optimization), 25% of the value of permanently installed products (by cost) must use one of the following to comply:

- *USGBC approved program,*
- *GreenScreen v1.2 Benchmark – product must have fully inventoried chemical ingredients to 100 ppm that have no Benchmark 1 hazards,^d*
- *Cradle to Cradle Certified – product is valued based on the version and certification level of the various Cradle to Cradle programs,^e or*
- *International Alternative Compliance Path – REACH Optimization – product cannot contain substance that meet REACH criteria for substances of very high concern.^f*

The Supply Chain Optimization option requires 25% of the value of permanently installed products (by cost) must be from product manufactures:

- *who engage in validated and robust safety, health, hazard and risk programs, and*
- *with independent third party verification.*

^b <http://hpdcollaborative.org/>

^c http://c2ccertified.org/product_certification

^d <http://www.greenscreenchemicals.org/>

^e c2ccertified.org/product_certification

^f echa.europa.eu/support/guidance;jsessionid=708167B5EE5BFA01D7B314128B9CE43B.live1

Security and impact resistance

Concrete is often used as a first line of defense against explosions or blasts. Rows of concrete planters or bollards are now positioned in front of most federal buildings such as courthouses, office buildings, and other high-security areas, to prevent ingress. Decorative concrete walls are also used as a primary line of defense to prevent vehicles from coming close to buildings. From a holistic perspective, the barriers may also provide benches and a visual separation between the street and plaza. Precast concrete wall panels have been shown to be an effective construction method for blast resistance.

Precast Concrete Production

The production of precast concrete has many environmental benefits over standard cast-in-place concrete:

- Fewer materials are required because precise mixture proportions and tighter tolerances are achievable, and prestressing allows for smaller cross sections.
- Excess concrete is often used for plant improvement projects.
- Optimal insulation levels can be incorporated into precast concrete sandwich wall panels.
- Less concrete waste is created because of tight control of quantities of constituent materials.
- Waste materials are more likely to be recycled because concrete production is in one location.
 - Gray water is often recycled into future mixtures, or used for plant dust control.
 - Hardened concrete is recycled (presently about 5% to 20% of aggregate in precast concrete can be recycled concrete; in the future this could be higher).
 - Steel forms and other materials are reused.
- Less dust and waste is created at the construction site because only needed precast concrete elements are delivered and there is no debris from formwork and associated fasteners—construction sites are cleaner and neater.
- Fewer trucks and less time are required for construction because concrete is made off-site; this is particularly beneficial in urban areas where minimal traffic disruption is critical.
- Precast concrete units are normally large components, so greater portions of the building are completed with each activity.
- Less noise at construction site because concrete is made off-site.

Less concrete is generally used in precast/prestressed concrete buildings than in other concrete buildings because of the optimization of materials. A properly designed precast concrete system will result in smaller structural members, longer spans, and less material used on-site, and shorter construction schedules; this translates directly into economic savings, which can also result in environmental savings. Using fewer materials means using fewer natural resources and less manufacturing and transportation energy—not to mention the avoided emissions from mining, processing, and transporting raw and finished material.

Concrete products can provide both the building structure and the interior and exterior finishes. Structurally efficient columns, beams, and slabs can be left exposed with natural finishes. Interior and exterior concrete walls offer a wide range of profile, texture, and color options that require little or no additional treatment to achieve aesthetically pleasing results. Exposed ceiling slabs and architectural precast concrete components are some examples of this environmentally efficient approach. This structure/finish combination reduces the need for the production, installation, maintenance, repair, and replacement of additional finish materials. It also eliminates products that could otherwise degrade indoor air quality. This approach provides durable finishes that are not prone to damage or fire. Exposing the mass of the structure moderates heating and cooling loads.

Constituent Materials

Concrete

Concrete is basically a mixture of two components: aggregates and paste. The paste, comprised of portland cement and water, binds the aggregates (usually sand and gravel or crushed stone) into a rocklike mass. The paste hardens because of the chemical reaction of the cement and water. Supplementary cementitious materials and chemical admixtures may also be included in the paste.

Portland cement

Portland cement (hereafter called cement) is made by heating common minerals—primarily crushed limestone, clay, iron ore, and sand—to a white-hot mixture to form clinker. This intermediate product is ground, with a small amount of gypsum, to form a fine gray powder called cement. To trigger the necessary chemical reactions in the kiln, these raw materials must reach about 2700 °F (1482 °C)—the temperature of molten iron. Although the portland cement industry is energy intensive, the U.S. cement industry has reduced energy usage per ton of cement by 41% since 1972.^{29,30}

Carbon dioxide emissions from a cement plant are divided into two source categories: combustion and calcination. Combustion accounts for approximately 35% and calcination 65% of the total CO₂ emissions from a cement manufacturing facility. The combustion-generated CO₂ emissions are related to fuel use. The calcination CO₂ emissions are formed when the raw material is heated and CO₂ is liberated from the calcium carbonate. As concrete is exposed to the air and carbonates, it reabsorbs some of the CO₂ released during calcination. Calcination is a necessary key to cement production. Therefore, the focus of reductions in CO₂ emissions during cement manufacturing is on reducing fuel and energy use.

White portland cement is a true portland cement that differs from gray cement chiefly in color. The manufacturing process is controlled so that the finished product will be white. White portland cement is made of selected raw materials containing negligible amounts of iron and magnesium oxides—the substances that give cement its gray color. White-cement use is recommended wherever white or colored concrete, grout, or mortar is desired. White portland cement should be specified as meeting the specifications of ASTM C150, Type I, II, III, or V.³¹

Abundant materials

Concrete is used in almost every country of the world as a basic building material. Aggregates, about 85% of

LEED v4 Materials and Resources Credit 3 on Building Product Disclosure and Optimization—Sourcing of Raw Materials.

The purpose of this credit is to address responsible sourcing of materials used on the project. Two options are available: Raw Material Source and Extraction Reporting, and Leadership Extraction Practices.

The first method of compliance (Raw Material Source and Extraction Reporting) is to use 20 permanently installed products—sourced from at least 5 different manufacturers—that have a publicly released report from suppliers including:

- Raw material supplier extraction locations,
- A commitment to long-term ecologically responsible land use,
- A commitment to reducing environmental harms from extraction and/or manufacturing processes, and
- A commitment to meeting applicable standards or programs voluntarily that address responsible sourcing criteria.

If manufacturers provide self-declared reports for Option 1, products are valued at ½ of a product. Manufacturers that have third-party verified corporate sustainability reports (CSR), conforming to one of the following frameworks, are valued at 1 whole product.

- Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Sustainability Report^a
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises^b
- U.N. Global Compact: Communication of Progress^c
- ISO 26000: 2010 Guidance on Social Responsibility^d
- USGBC approved program

For Option 2, Leadership Extraction Practices, 25% of the total value of permanently installed building products must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Bio-based according to the Sustainable Agriculture Network's Sustainable Agriculture Standard
- New wood certified by FSC or USGBC-approved equivalent
- Reused materials
- Recycled content, which is still calculated as postconsumer content plus ½ preconsumer content
- USGBC-approved program

Concrete typically uses supplementary cementitious materials, such as fly ash, silica fume, and slag cement, which are considered post-industrial recycled content.

For the purpose of calculations, products are valued based on source location as such:

- Products sourced within 100 miles of project site are valued at 200% of their cost.
- Products sourced domestically within 500 miles of project site are valued at 150% of their cost.

concrete, are generally low-energy, local, naturally occurring sand and stone. Limestone and clay needed to manufacture cement are prevalent in most countries. Concrete contributes to a sustainable environment because it does not use scarce resources. Limestone and aggregate quarries are easily reused. While quarrying is intense, it is closely contained and temporary. When closed, aggregate quarries are generally converted to their natural state or into recreational areas or agricultural uses. In contrast, other material mining operations can be extensive and involve deep pits that are rarely restored, and deforestation that can have negative environmental effects.

^g globalreporting.org/

^h oecd.org/daf/internationalinvestment/guidelinesformultinationalenterprises/

ⁱ unglobalcompact.org/cop/

^j www.iso.org/iso/home.html

Fly ash, slag cement, and silica fume

Fly ash, slag cement, and silica fume are industrial byproducts; their use as a replacement for portland cement does not contribute to the energy and CO₂ effects of cement in concrete. If not used in concrete, these supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs) would use valuable landfill space. Fly ash (**Fig. 8a**) is a byproduct of the combustion of pulverized coal in electric power generating plants. Slag cement (**Fig. 8b**) is made from iron blast-furnace slag.³¹ Silica fume (**Fig. 8c**) is a byproduct from the electric arc furnace used in the production of silicon or ferrosilicon alloy. These types of industrial byproducts are considered postindustrial or preconsumer recycled materials. Fly ash is commonly used at cement replacement levels up to 35%, slag cement up to 60%, and silica fume up to 7%. When slag cement replaces 50% of the portland cement in a 7500 psi (50 MPa) concrete mixture, greenhouse gas emissions per cubic yard of concrete are reduced by 45%. Because the cementitious content of concrete is about 15%, these pozzolans typically account for only 2% to 5% of the overall concrete material in buildings.

SCMs may slightly alter the color of hardened concrete. Color effects are related to the color and amount of the material used in concrete. Many SCMs resemble the color of portland cement and therefore have little effect on the color of the hardened concrete. Some silica fumes may give concrete a slightly bluish or dark gray tint and tan fly ash may impart a tan color to concrete when used in large quantities. Slag cement and metakaolin (a clay SCM without recycled content) can make concrete lighter. Slag cement can initially impart a bluish or greenish undertone that disappears over time as concrete is allowed to dry and is exposed to ultraviolet light (sunlight).

The optimum amounts of SCMs used with portland or blended cement are determined by testing, the relative cost and availability of the materials, and the specified properties of the concrete. When SCMs are used, the proportioned concrete mixture (using the project materials) should be tested to demonstrate that it meets the required concrete properties for the project. Some pozzolans increase curing times, which can be a concern on projects where construction schedule



Figure 8a Fly ash, a byproduct of the electric industry, can be used as a partial replacement for portland cement.

(Courtesy Portland Cement Association)

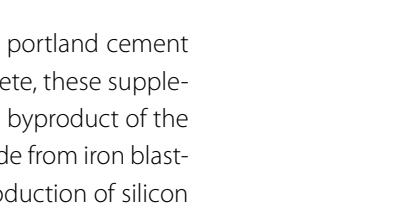


Figure 8b Slag cement is a cementitious material and a byproduct of the iron industry.

(Courtesy Portland Cement Association)



Figure 8c Silica fume, an industrial byproduct, is commonly used to replace cement in quantities from 5% to 7%.

(Courtesy Portland Cement Association)



Figure 9 Crushed concrete from other sources can serve as recycled aggregate. (Courtesy Portland Cement Association)

has a greater impact.

The durability of products with recycled-content materials should be carefully researched during the design process to ensure comparable life-cycle performance. There would obviously be a net negative impact if a product offering a 20% to 30% recycled content had only half the expected service life of a product with a lower or no recycled content.

Recycled aggregates

The environmental attributes of concrete can be improved by using aggregates derived from industrial waste or using recycled concrete as aggregates. Blast-furnace slag is a lightweight aggregate with a long history of use in the concrete industry.

Recycled concrete can be used as aggregate in new concrete, particularly the coarse portion. When using the recycled concrete as aggregate, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Recycled concrete as aggregate will typically have higher absorption and lower specific gravity than natural aggregate and will produce concrete with slightly higher drying shrinkage and creep. These differences become greater with increasing amounts of recycled fine aggregates.
- Too many recycled fines can also produce a harsh and unworkable mixture. Many transportation departments have found that using 100% coarse recycled aggregate, but only about 10% to 20% recycled fines, works well.³² The remaining percentage of fines is natural sand.
- When crushing the concrete (**Fig. 9**), it is difficult to control particle size distribution, meaning that the “aggregate” may fail to meet grading requirements of ASTM C33.³²
- The chloride content of recycled aggregates is of concern if the material will be used in reinforced concrete. This is particularly an issue if the recycled concrete is from pavements in northern climates where road salt is freely spread in the winter.
- The alkali content and type of aggregate in the system are probably unknown, and therefore if mixed with unsuitable materials, a risk of alkali-silica reaction (ASR) is possible.

Admixtures

The freshly mixed (plastic) and hardened properties of concrete may be changed by adding chemical admixtures to the concrete, usually in liquid form, during batching. Chemical admixtures are commonly used to

- adjust setting time or hardening,
- reduce water demand,
- increase workability, and
- intentionally entrain air.

Admixtures provide enhancing qualities in concrete but are used in such small quantities that they do not adversely affect the environment. Their dosages are usually in the range of 0.005% to 0.2% of the concrete mass.

Color pigments

Nonfading color pigments are used to provide the decorative colors in precast concrete. They are insoluble and generally nontoxic, although some may contain trace amounts of heavy metals. Many iron oxide pigments are primarily the byproduct of material recycling (manufactured by precipitating scrap steel).

Local materials

Using local materials reduces the transportation required to ship heavy building materials, and the associated energy and emissions. Most precast concrete plants are within 200 mi (300 km) of a building site. The cement, aggregates, and reinforcing steel used to make the concrete and the raw materials to manufacture cement are usually obtained or extracted from sources within 200 mi of the precast concrete plant. The primary raw materials used to make cement and concrete are abundant in all areas of the world.

Precast concrete elements are usually shipped efficiently because of their large, often repetitive sizes and the ability to plan their shipment during the normal course of the project. Shipping can also be scheduled around peak traffic times, thus eliminating or reducing idle time and fuel usage.

Energy Use in Buildings

Energy conservation is a key tenet of sustainability. About 90% of the energy used during a building's life is attributed to heating, cooling, and other utilities. The remaining 10% is attributed to manufacturing materials, construction, maintenance, replacement of components, and demolition.³⁵

Approximately 5% of the world's population resides in the United States, yet 25% of the world's energy is consumed there. Meanwhile, many developing nations like China have increased energy demands due to increased manufacturing and urbanization.

Energy Codes

Energy codes provide cost-effective minimum building requirements that save energy. The energy saved is a cost savings through lower monthly utility bills, and smaller and thus less expensive HVAC equipment. More than two-thirds of the electricity and one-third of the total energy in the United States are used to heat, cool, and operate buildings.²⁹ This means that implementing and

enforcing energy codes will result in more efficient use of available energy and natural resources being used to provide electricity and natural gas. It also means fewer emissions will be released into the atmosphere. Emissions have been linked to smog, acid rain, and climate change. In the United States, most buildings are constructed to meet minimum energy-code requirements; energy codes contribute to sustainability by saving energy and protecting the environment.

Energy codes are effective in reducing per capita energy usage (energy use per person). The per capita energy use in California has remained steady due to the state's active use and enforcement of energy codes for buildings, while in the rest of the United States that energy use has increased (**Fig. 10**).

The U.S. Energy Conservation and Production Act³⁸ requires that each state certify that it has a commercial building code that meets or exceeds ANSI/ASHRAE/IESNA Standard 90.1.³⁷ In this sense, commercial means all buildings that are not low-rise residential (three stories or less above grade). This includes office, industrial, warehouse, school, religious, dormitories, and high-rise residential buildings. The ASHRAE standard and most codes recognize the benefits of thermal mass and require less insulation for mass walls.

Thermal mass in exterior walls has the following benefits and characteristics:

- Delays and reduces peak loads.
- Reduces total loads in many climates and locations.
- Works best in commercial applications.

Total Electricity Use, per capita, 1960 – 2001 (estimated for California in 2000 and 2001)

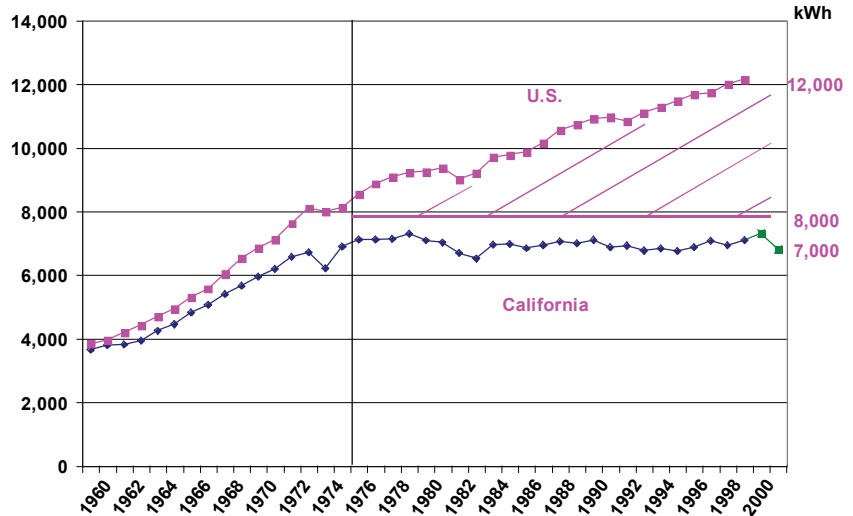


Figure 10 Energy savings due to implementation of energy codes in 1976 in California (California Energy Commission).

- Works well in residential applications.
- Works best when mass is exposed on the inside surface.
- Works well regardless of the placement of mass.

Mass works well in commercial applications by delaying the peak summer load, which generally occurs around 3:00 p.m. to later, when offices begin to close. As a case in point, the blackout in the northeastern United States in August 2003 occurred at 3:05 p.m.³³ A shift in peak load would have helped alleviate the demand and, possibly, this peak power problem.

Also, many commercial and industrial customers incur significant time-of-use utility rate charges for the highest use of electricity for any 1 hr in a month in the summer. Thermal mass may help shift the peak hour of electric demand for air conditioning to a later hour, and help reduce these time-of-use charges. Nighttime ventilation can be used to cool thermal mass that has been warmed during the day. Local outdoor humidity levels influence the effectiveness of nighttime ventilation strategies.

As occupant and equipment heat is generated, it is absorbed not only by the indoor ventilated air but also by the massive elements of the building. Mass works well on the inside surfaces by absorbing the heat gains generated by people and equipment indoors. Interior mass from interior walls, floors, and ceiling will help moderate room temperatures and reduce peak energy use.

Thermal mass is most effective in locations and seasons where the daily outdoor temperature rises above and falls below the balance point temperature of the building. The balance point temperature is the outdoor temperature below which heating will be required. It is less than room temperature, generally between 50 °F and 60 °F (10 °C

LEED v4 Energy and Atmosphere Prerequisite 2 on Minimum Energy Performance

In this prerequisite, the general requirement is that new construction save 5% compared to ANSI/ASHRAE/IESNA Standard 90.1-2010, Energy Standard for Buildings Except Low-Rise Residential Buildings. This can be demonstrated through whole building energy simulations (computer modeling) for Option 1, through compliance with ASHRAE Advanced Energy Design Guides (AEDG) for Option 2, or through compliance with Advanced Buildings Core Performance Guide for Option 3. The ASHRAE standard is usually more stringent and applies for most states. This prerequisite is a requirement and is not worth any points. The requirements of the ASHRAE standard are cost effective and not particularly stringent for concrete. Insulating to meet or exceed the requirements of the standard is generally a wise business choice. Determining compliance for the envelope components is relatively straightforward using the tables in chapter 5 of the ASHRAE standard. Minimum requirements are provided for mass and nonmass components such as walls and floors.

and 15 °C), at the point where internal heat gains are about equal to the heat losses through the building envelope. In many climates, buildings with thermal mass have lower energy consumption than non-massive buildings with walls of similar thermal resistance. In addition, heating and cooling needs can be met with smaller equipment sizes.

More information on thermal properties and energy-code compliance of precast concrete walls is available in Designer's Notebook, Energy Conservation and Condensation Control (DN-15).²²

Lighting

Light-colored precast concrete and other surfaces will reduce energy costs associated with indoor and outdoor lighting. The more reflective surfaces will reduce the amount of fixtures and lighting required. Light-colored precast concrete exposed to the interior will help reduce interior lighting requirements, and light-colored exterior walls will reduce outdoor lighting requirements.

Air infiltration

Precast concrete panels have negligible air infiltration. Minimizing air infiltration between panels and at floors

Material	Average Leakage at 0.3 in. Water Surface (cfm/ft ²)
6 mil (0.15 mm) polyethylene	No measurable leakage
1 in. (25 mm) expanded polystyrene	1.0
12 mm (0.47 in.) fiberboard sheathing	0.3
Breather type building membranes	0.002–0.7
Closed cell foam insulation	0.0002
Uncoated brick wall	0.3
Uncoated concrete block	0.4
Precast concrete wall	No measurable leakage

Note: 1 in. = 25.4 mm; 1 cfm/ft² = 0.3048 m³ per min/m²

Table 6 Measured Air Leakage for Selected Building Materials.²¹

and ceilings will provide a building with low air infiltration. These effects will lower energy costs and help prevent moisture problems from infiltration of humid air. In hot and humid climates in the southeastern United States, infiltration of moist air is a source of unsightly and unhealthy moisture problems in buildings. Some building codes³⁷ now limit air leakage of building materials to 0.004 ft³/ft² (0.0012 m³/min/m²) under a pressure differential of 0.3 in. (7.6 mm) water (1.57 lb/ft² [0.075 kPa]); precast concrete meets this requirement. **Table 6** lists the measured air leakage values for selected building materials.

Advanced Energy Guidelines

Sustainability or green building programs (such as LEED or Energy Star) encourage energy savings beyond minimum code requirements. The energy saved is a cost savings to the building owner through lower monthly utility bills and smaller, less expensive heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) equipment. Some **government** programs offer tax incentives for energy-saving features. Other programs offer reduced mortgage rates. The Energy Star program offers simple computer programs to determine the utility savings and lease upgrades associ-

ated with energy saving upgrades.

Many energy-saving measures are cost effective even though they exceed minimum codes. Insulation and other energy-saving measures in building codes generally have a payback of about 5 years, even though the building life may be anywhere from 30 to 100 years. ASHRAE Advanced Energy Design Guide For Small Office Buildings⁴⁰ has a similar purpose. Many utilities are interested in these advanced guidelines to delay the need for new power plants.

LEED v4 Energy Credit 1 on Optimizing Energy Performance. *This credit is allowed if energy cost savings can be shown compared to a base building that meets the requirements of ANSI/ASHRAE/IESNA 90.1- 2010, Energy Standard for Buildings Except Low-Rise Residential Buildings. The method of determining energy cost savings must meet the requirements of Appendix G, "Performance Rating Method," of the standard.*

*Many engineering consulting firms have the capability to model a building to determine energy savings as required using a computer-based program such as DOE2. When concrete is considered, it is important to use a program like DOE²⁷ that calculates annual energy use on an hourly basis. Such programs are needed to capture the beneficial thermal mass effects of concrete. Insulated concrete systems, used in conjunction with other energy-saving measures, will most likely be eligible for LEED points. Also, Hevacomp Mechanical and Energy Modeling (www.bentley.com) can be used to analyze heat loss and gain and building area overheating. It can also produce 3-D external shading graphics and internal solar penetration graphics showing the moving patches of sunlight within rooms. The number of points awarded will depend on the building, climate, fuel costs, and minimum requirements of the standard. From 1 to 18 LEED points are awarded for energy cost savings of 6% to 50% for new buildings and 4% to 48% for existing buildings (**Table 7**). Option 2, showing compliance with one of the ASHRAE Advanced Energy Design Guides (AEDG), is also available for up to 6 points.*

The panelized construction of precast concrete insulated wall panels lends itself to good practice and optimization of insulation levels. To maximize the effectiveness of the insulation, thermal bridges should be minimized or avoided. Thermal bridges may occur where metal connectors are used through the insulation to connect two concrete layers together. Thermal bridges may also occur in zones of solid concrete where no insulation is present. This typically occurs at the very top and bottom of the panel. Using fiberglass or carbon-fiber composite fasteners or thermal breaks may minimize thermal bridges.

Indoor Environmental Quality

Concrete contains low to negligible VOCs. These compounds degrade indoor air quality when they off-gas from new products, such as interior finishings, carpet, and furniture. Manufactured wood products such as laminate, particle board, hardboard siding, and treated wood can also lead to off-gassing. In addition, VOCs combine with other chemicals in the air to form ground-level ozone. **Table 8** presents the VOC concentration and emission rates for common materials. Complaints due to poor indoor air quality routinely include eye, nose, and throat irritation; dryness of the mucous membranes and skin; nose bleeds; skin rash; mental fatigue and headache; cough; hoarseness; wheezing; nausea; dizziness; and increased incidence of asthma.

New Construction, Energy Saved	Major Renovation, Energy Saved	Points
6%	4%	1
8%	6%	2
10%	8%	3
12%	10%	4
14%	12%	5
16%	14%	6
18%	16%	7
20%	18%	8
22%	20%	9
24%	22%	10
26%	24%	11
29%	27%	12
32%	30%	13
35%	33%	14
38%	36%	15
42%	40%	16
46%	44%	17
50%	48%	18

* LEED: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

Table 7 LEED* v4 Points Awarded for Energy Costs Saved Beyond Minimum Code.

Building Material	VOC Concentration, mg/m ³	VOC Emission Rate, mg/m ² h
Concrete with water-based form-release agent	0.018	0.003
Acryl latex paint	2.00	0.43
Epoxy, clear floor varnish	5.45	1.3
Felt carpet	1.95	0.080
Gypsum board	N/A	0.026
Linoleum	5.19	0.22
Particle board	N/A	2.0
Plastic silicone sealer	77.9	26.0
Plywood paneling	N/A	1.0
Putty strips	1.38	0.34
PVA [†] glue cement	57.8	10.2
Sheet vinyl flooring	54.8	2.3
Silicone caulk	N/A	< 2.0
Water-based EVA [‡] wall and floor glue	1410.0	271.0

*VOCs = volatile organic compounds.

[†]PVA = polyvinyl acetate.

[‡]EVA = ethylene vinyl acetate.

Note: 1 mg/m³ = 0.000009 oz/yd³; 1 mg/m²h = 0.00001 oz/yd²h.

Table 8 Concentrations and Emission Rates of VOCs* for Common Materials.

Polished concrete floors do not re-

LEED v4 Indoor Environmental Quality Credit 3 on Construction Indoor Air Quality Management Plan, During Construction. This credit prevents indoor air quality problems resulting from the construction process. The intent is to reduce and contain dust and particulates during construction and to reduce moisture absorbed by materials that are damaged by moisture. During construction, the project must meet or exceed the recommended Design Approaches of the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' Association (SMACNA) IAQ Guidelines for Occupied Buildings under Construction, 2007, chapter 3 on Control Measures (www.smacna.org). Using precast concrete can help meet the requirements because it is delivered to the site in pieces that do not require fabrication, processing, or cutting, thereby reducing dust and airborne contaminants on the construction site. Concrete is not damaged by moisture and does not provide nutrients for mold growth. This credit is worth 1 point.

quire carpeting. Exposed concrete walls do not require finishing materials—this eliminates particulates from sanding drywall tape seams. VOCs in concrete construction can be further reduced by using low-VOC materials for form release agents, curing compounds, damp-proof-

LEED v4 Indoor Environmental Quality Credit 2 on Low-Emitting Materials. *The purpose of this credit is to reduce the quantity of indoor air contaminants that are odorous, irritating, and/or harmful to the comfort and well being of installers and occupants. There is very low emission of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from precast and prestressed concrete surfaces and they do not degrade indoor air quality. Insulated precast/prestressed concrete sandwich panels can be used as exposed exterior and interior walls in schools eliminating drywall.*

For Healthcare and Schools projects, LEED v4 has a new requirement for exterior applied products: "Adhesives, sealants, coatings, roofing and waterproofing materials applied on-site shall meet the VOC limits of California Air Resources Board (CARB) 2007 Suggested Control Measure (SCM) for Architectural Coatings and South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 1168 effective July 1, 2005. The provisions of this section shall not apply to small containers of adhesives and sealants subject to state or federal consumer product VOC regulations." There are sealants and coatings that are applied to the exterior surface of precast concrete that meet this requirement.

ing materials, wall and floor coatings and primers, membranes, sealers, and water repellents.

LEED v4 Indoor Environmental Quality Credit 9 for Enhanced Acoustical Performance. *The purpose of this credit promote occupant well-being, productivity, and communication through effective acoustical design. This credit can be obtained with precast concrete walls, floors, or ceilings, which usually do not need additional treatments because of mass, in order to provide adequate sound insulation. If desired, greater sound insulation can be obtained by using a resiliently attached layer(s) of gypsum board or other building material. This is worth 1 point . See Designer's Notebook (DN-18), Acoustics.²*

LEED v4 Materials Credit 5 on Construction Waste Management. This credit is extended for diverting construction and demolition debris and land clearing waste from landfill disposal and incineration. Calculations are still done by weight or volume. Two options are available for earning points in this credit.

In Option 1, the possible points depend on whether 50% of the total construction and demolition waste is diverted from three material streams (1 point), or 75% of the total construction and demolition waste is diverted from four material streams (2 points). For Option 2, a project can earn 2 points if less than 2.5 lb of construction waste is generated per square foot of building floor area. No matter the option chosen by the project team, concrete can contribute because waste is minimal, and whatever waste is generated is recyclable in most areas.

Since precast concrete does not contribute significant construction waste to the site, this credit should be more-easily obtained when using precast concrete.

LEED v4 Innovation Credit 1. This credit is available for projects that demonstrate exceptional performance above the requirements in LEED or innovative strategies not specifically addressed in LEED. For example, close collaboration with engineers on a given project to develop innovative systems that are more resource efficient or use less energy may earn a project an additional point. The maximum number of points available in this credit category is 5, and points can come from either compliance path.

To earn points (up to 4) through PATH 1-Innovation, the user must submit the intent of the proposed credit, the proposed requirement for compliance, submittals to demonstrate that compliance, and the design approach used to meet the requirement.

To earn points (up to 4) through PATH 2-Pilot, the user must achieve one pilot credit from USGBC's LEED Pilot Credit Library.

To earn credits (up to 2) through PATH 3-Exemplary Performance, the user must "double the credit requirement or achieve the next incremental percentage threshold" of prerequisite or credits that allow exemplary performance.

For example, if 30% of a project's materials were extracted, processed, and manufactured regionally, then the project could receive an extra point in going significantly beyond the requirements of Materials and Resources Credit 5.2. Another potential innovation is to use exposed concrete for walls, floors, and ceiling. This strategy would eliminate a significant quantity of wall and floor coverings along with ceiling materials, all of which are common sources of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that can degrade indoor air. This strategy could significantly improve indoor air quality.

LEED v4 Innovation Credit 2. One point is also given if a principal participant of the project team is a LEED Accredited Professional. The concrete industry has LEED-experienced professionals available to assist teams with concrete applications and help maximize points for concrete.

Reduced Waste

Precast concrete components can be reused when buildings are expanded and precast concrete can be recycled as road base or fill at the end of its useful life. Concrete pieces from demolished structures can be reused to protect shorelines. Most concrete from demolition in urban areas is recycled and not placed in landfills.

LEED Regional Priority Credit 1. These regional bonus credits are identified by USGBC Chapters and Regional Councils for each "environmental zone." Each USGBC Region has the authority to create 6 potential bonus credits for implementing green building strategies that address the important environmental issues facing their region, of which a maximum of 4 may be earned. A Regional Priority credit database is available on USGBC's website (www.usgbc.org).

Precast concrete minimizes the total waste generated by off-site fabrication. Less dust and waste are created at construction sites because only needed precast concrete elements are delivered; there is no debris from formwork and associated fasteners. Fewer trucks and less time are required for construction because concrete is made off-site; this is particularly beneficial in urban areas where minimal traffic disruption is critical. Precast concrete units are normally large components, so greater portions of the building are completed with each activity, creating less disruption overall. Less noise is generated at construction sites because concrete is made off-site.

Innovation

It is important to note that in this credit category, Innovation in Design credits that have been previously awarded will not necessarily be awarded on future projects. Once a particular Innovation in Design strategy has been used a number of times, the USGBC may deem the project as standard practice and no longer consider it innovative. It is important that design strategies used in this credit category require an extraordinary level of effort by the design team.

Regional Priority

This credit category was introduced in LEED 2009 because of the relative importance of different environmental impacts in different geographic areas. For example, with water shortages in the desert-southwest of the United States, more emphasis should be placed on water-efficiency design strategies.

Conclusion

Sustainable practices contribute to saving materials and energy and reducing the negative effects of pollutants. The use of precast concrete contributes to these practices by incorporating integrated design; using materials efficiently; and reducing construction waste, site disturbance, and noise. Concrete is durable, resistant to corrosion and impact, and pests.

Precast concrete structures are resistant to fires, wind, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, wind-driven rain, blast forces, and moisture damage. Light- or natural-colored concrete reduces heat islands, thereby reducing outdoor temperatures, saving energy, and reducing smog. Recycled materials such as fly ash, slag cement, silica fume, and recycled aggregates can be incorporated into concrete, thereby reducing the amount of materials that are taken to landfills and reducing the use of virgin materials.

Concrete structures in urban areas are recycled into fill and road base material at the end of their useful life. Cement and concrete are generally made of abundant local materials. The thermal mass of concrete helps save heating and cooling energy in buildings. Concrete acts as an air barrier, reducing air infiltration and saving more energy. Concrete has low VOC emittance and does not degrade indoor air quality. Sustainability attributes can be evaluated by performing a life-cycle assessment. Because these procedures are time consuming, green building rating systems such as LEED have become popular.

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Glossary

Admixture

Material—other than water, aggregate, and hydraulic cement—used as an ingredient of concrete, mortar, grout, or plaster and added to the batch immediately before or during mixing. Chemical admixtures are most commonly used for freeze-thaw protection, to improve workability, to improve permeability, to add color, to internally seal the concrete, to retard or accelerate the concrete setting time, or to allow less water to be used in the concrete.

Albedo

Solar reflectance; see reflectance.

Building envelope

The components of a building that perform as a system to separate conditioned space from unconditioned space.

Calcination

Process of heating a source of calcium carbonate, such as limestone, to high temperatures, thereby causing a chemical reaction that releases CO₂. This CO₂ is not related to the fuel used to heat the calcium carbonate.

Cement

See portland cement.

Cementitious material (cementing material)

Any material having cementing properties or contributing to the formation of hydrated calcium silicate compounds. When proportioning concrete, the following are considered cementitious materials: portland cement, blended hydraulic cement, fly ash, ground granulated blast-furnace slag, silica fume, calcined clay, metakaolin, calcined shale, and rice husk ash.

Concrete

Mixture of binding materials and coarse and fine aggregates. Portland cement and water are commonly used as the binding medium for normal concrete, but may also contain pozzolans, slag, and/or chemical admixtures.

Environmental Product Declaration (EPD)

A Type III environmental label according to International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14025.

Emittance

The ability of the material to emit or let go of heat.

Green building

A building designed considering the concepts of sustainable design and reduction of environmental impacts due to site selection, water use, energy use, materials and resources, the building's impact on the environment, and indoor air quality.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Emissions that have the potential to increase air temperatures at the earth's surface, including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, chlorofluorocarbons, water vapor, and aerosols (particles of 0.001 to 10µm diameter).

Life-Cycle Assessment (LCA)

An environmental assessment of a product, process, or service over its full life, from extraction to end-of-life, that characterizes LCI data into environmental impact categories.

Life-Cycle Inventory (LCI)

An accounting of all materials and energy used by a product, process, or service within the system boundary, and all emissions from the system boundary.

Portland cement

Calcium silicate hydraulic cement produced by pulverizing portland cement clinker, and usually containing calcium sulfate and other compounds.

Pozzolan

A siliceous or siliceous and aluminous material, such as fly ash or silica fume, that in itself possesses little or no cementitious value but that will, in finely divided form and in the presence of moisture, chemically react in the presence of portland cement to form a compound possessing cementitious properties.

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Learning Objectives:

This article provides an overview of the design concepts for connections of architectural precast concrete enclosure systems. This includes the types of connections and hardware as well as design considerations, such as fireproofing. The article also addresses who is typically responsible to supply field hardware.

1. Readers will be able to better understand broad sustainability-related topics.
2. Readers will be able to explain concepts of integrated design, life-cycle assessment, and resiliency.
3. Readers will be able to discuss the different green building codes, standards, and rating systems that are in the market.
4. Readers will be able to describe how precast concrete can be used to design and build more-sustainable buildings.

A microclimate near an urban or suburban area that is warmer than surrounding areas due to the replacement of

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