

Boston Convention & Exhibition Center Earns LEED Certification

By Boston Green Tourism
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When conference planners consider Boston, they see many green-certified hotels. Now, they see a green-certified convention center, too.

In 2016, the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center (BCEC) earned the LEED EBOM (LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance) Silver rating. Only a few convention centers have attained this distinction.

Vanderweil Engineers and Simpson Gumpertz & Heger thoroughly audited the BCEC's energy use, water use, waste management, purchasing and housekeeping practices--and made recommendations for improvement.

Here are some of the BCEC's green achievements, many of which are relevant to hotels:

Waste Management

The BCEC recycles approximately 50% of its waste--totaling 600 tons per year.

- Conventions C.A.R.E Program: donates unused items (office products, furniture, event bags, lanyards, etc.) at the end of their events to schools, charities, churches and other organizations.
- Food Donation: donated over 30 tons of food to Greater Boston Food Bank, New England Center for Homeless Veterans and Boston Rescue Mission in FY 2016.
- Food Waste and Compostable Flatware: the BCEC and Hynes Convention Center sent 263 tons to a local farm to be composted in 2015. Their hauler is Save That Stuff.

- Electronic Waste: has a designated e-waste collection area. Uses the Big Green Box program to recycle batteries. Recycles electrical and internet cables.
- Pallets: donates used pallets to Xpedx Transportation for reuse.
- Carpet and Padding Scraps: sends it to a facility where it's recycled into cement blocks and asphalt.
- Water Bottles: offers complimentary 5-gallon dispensers in every meeting room as an attractive alternative to bottled water.

Energy

Vanderweil Engineers conducted an ASHRAE Level 2 audit that identified numerous energy efficiency opportunities.

Recent BCEC energy projects:

- Renewable Energy: offset 100% of their energy consumption by purchasing Green-e Energy Certified RECs from a wind farm and Verified Carbon Offsets from an operation that captures landfill gas for reuse. Their supplier is 3Degrees.
- Lighting Controls: installed controls in all meeting rooms that turn off lights when the rooms are unoccupied.
- Stairwell Lighting: installed dimmable ballasts in the emergency stairwells that reduce light levels by 90% until they are activated.
- LED Tubes: replacing 4-foot fluorescent lights in the entire facility with LED's.
- Energy Efficient Operations: they reduce lighting and HVAC when exhibitors are setting up and breaking down their exhibits.

Transportation

- Mass Transit: provides conference attendees with free silver line trips from Logan Airport. Sells Charlie Cards on-site.
- Electric Vehicles: installed eight EV charging stations.
- Bicycling: has two onsite Hubway terminals, covered bike racks and secure bike storage.

Indoor Air Quality

- Audit: conducted an I-BEAM Audit (IAQ Building Education and Assessment Model) and made several changes that improved indoor air quality.
- Green Cleaning: uses electrolyzed water for general cleaning. Their floor cleaning machines use Tennant ec-H₂O Technology, which converts water into a cleaning solution, too.

Green Procurement

- Cleaning and Paper Products: are Green Seal certified.
- Food and Beverage: sources much of its food from Massachusetts.