CONTRACTOR'S COMMITMENT

to sustainable building practices

Version 2.0

In Effect 2023

Contractor's Commitment

FOREWORD

Contractors are uniquely positioned to impact the sustainability of building projects. In preconstruction, contractors impact the design of a building by providing feedback to designers and clients. They influence product and material selection through the submittal process. Finally, contractors control how a project gets built, including the equipment that's used, how construction waste is managed, and the extent of surrounding site and landscape disturbance.

The Sustainable Construction Leaders peer network, facilitated by BuildingGreen, is comprised of the most committed sustainability representatives from leading construction companies throughout North America. The core purpose of the Sustainable Construction Leaders peer network is to build a national community with regional ties that shares best practices, advocates for, and inspires change in a way that is collaborative, non-competitive, trusting, positive, and results-oriented so that we leverage the construction industry to combat climate change and create healthy environments.

Over time, some construction companies have recognized their influence and developed their own sustainability policies. However, there was no agreed upon framework for where to start or for identifying best practices. Different companies have developed different ways of tracking and calculating similar metrics, obscuring progress in the construction industry.

The Sustainable Construction Leaders created the Contractor's Commitment to fill this gap. Launched as a pilot program in 2021 and recently updated for the 2023 reporting year, the guidelines are intended to set a sustainability benchmark specific to the construction industry and provide uniformity in reporting sustainability performance. The Commitment is intended to be an entry point for any company, regardless of where they are in their sustainability journey or type of construction, and to evolve and progress climate change action over time with user feedback and industry knowledge.

These guidelines are publicly available for any contractor to apply as relevant to their practices. All contractors can review these guidelines, make their best faith effort to implement them, and then provide feedback. Companies may also formally sign on to the Commitment as a signatory for public recognition or join the Sustainable Construction Leaders Network for a bigger voice in this initiative.

HOW TO USE THE CONTRACTOR'S COMMITMENT

The guidelines will be updated periodically and cover five categories:

- **Carbon**
- **Jobsite Wellness**

- **Waste Management**
- **Water Management**
- **Materials**

Within each category, guidelines are outlined in three tiers: **good, better, and best.** The practices of the lower tiers must be implemented before qualifying for the higher tiers. The guidelines are structured this way to clearly identify potential next steps for a contractor seeking improvement.

The Contractor's Commitment may be used as a resource to guide internal company initiatives. If used only as an internal set of guidelines, no additional steps are required. However, if a company wishes to credibly and publicly state that it is implementing the Contractor's Commitment, gain public recognition for following it, or make a stronger statement to which it can hold itself accountable, that company must make a best faith effort to apply the guidelines. Project-specific actions should apply to at least 30% of company projects by either dollar volume or by square footage*. A minimum of 5 projects must be reported. The company may choose which tier to pursue in each category, but each category must be attempted at the 'good' level or higher. The Contractor's Commitment guidelines are periodically updated and signatories are involved in that process. Companies may be signatories as one entity, or if preferred, as individual regions or offices.

Signatory companies must:

1) Sign this document and upload it per the directions on the BuildingGreen website, and
2) Annually report performance using a provided standard template to BuildingGreen each calendar year. Signatories have the option to report data on a fiscal year or other alternate timeline as long as 12 consecutive months of overall data is included.

Signatory companies will be publicly recognized on the BuildingGreen website. Reported information will not be publicly disclosed by BuildingGreen in a way that can be traced to specific companies, although some tiers require a company disclose certain information publicly. For example, the "best" tier in the carbon category requires companies to publish emissions data at a publicly accessible location.

The Sustainable Construction Leaders (SCL) network will determine when and how the Contractor Sustainability Guidelines are modified and updated. To learn more about the Contractor's Commitment, click here.

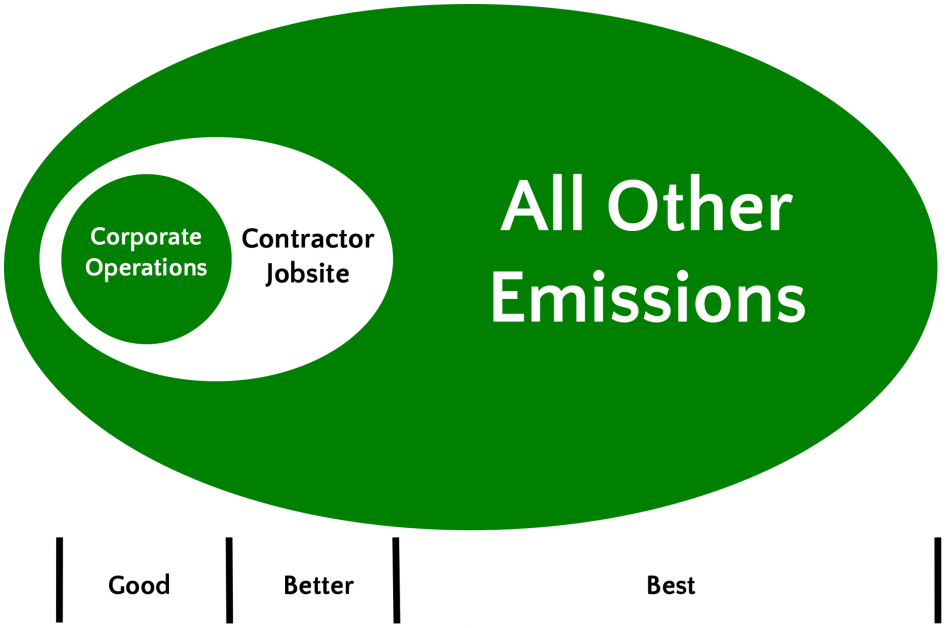
*If projects are reported by dollar volume, the revenue for each project should be reported for its contribution during the reporting period only and not as the entire projected project revenue. If projects are reported by square footage, the total building square footage can be used in each reporting year as applicable in lieu of the actual amount of square footage put in place during the reporting year.

The 30% benchmark does not apply to requirements that are intended to be applied company-wide. These are noted in parenthetical.

When given the opportunity to pick a certain number of measures from a menu of options, the same measures must be applied to all participating projects.

CARBON

The goal of this category is to outline practices that General Contractors can implement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our construction activities and our corporate operations and to advocate for greenhouse gas reductions by our partners and suppliers. The tiers have been developed around the following emissions structure for illustrative purposes.



Good - Corporate Operations

1. Track all fuel and utility usage for corporate operations. This includes fuel purchases for owned, leased, or rented equipment/vehicles and electric/steam/heat utilities for company-controlled facilities. (Company-wide)
2. Report findings internally annually. (Company-wide)

Better - Contractor Jobsite Operations

1. Track all fuel and utility usage for contractor jobsite operations. This includes fuel purchases for owned, leased, or rented equipment/vehicles and electric/steam/heat utilities for onsite contractor operations only. (Reported Projects)

2. Implement an anti-idling plan. (Company-wide)
3. Report out company-identifiable results to SCL annually. Results are not shared or published outside of SCL.
4. Develop a company emissions action plan with short and long-term reduction targets. (Company-wide)

CARBON (continued)

Best – All Other Carbon - Choose at least 5 of the following:

a. Track onsite fuel and utility usage for subcontractors. This includes fuel emissions from subcontractors (whether owned or rented) for both mobile and stationary equipment on jobsites. (Reported Projects)
b. Track embodied carbon of permanent building materials for all self-performed work. (Reported Projects)
c. Track fuel usage for materials deliveries and waste hauling at jobsites. (Reported Projects)
d. Track emissions from waste processing for all landfilled and recycled waste. (Company-wide)
e. Track emissions from all company-purchased cloud computing. (Company-wide)
f. Track refrigerant leakage for corporate-controlled facilities. (Company-wide)
g. Track emissions from employee commuting for both corporate facilities and jobsites. (Company-wide)
h. Track Scope 3 carbon emissions for corporate travel and company reimbursed fuel for private vehicles. (Company-wide)
i. Offset all emissions from corporate operations (Good tier fuel/utility usage and refrigerants). (Company-wide)
j. Publish emissions data at a publicly accessible location (i.e. corporate or third-party website). All data must be third party verified. (Company-wide)
k. Demonstrate meaningful advocacy for legislative action for carbon reduction at the local, state and/or national levels (Company-wide)

CARBON FAQs

1. How do I get started tracking emissions?
   There is well-established guidance for how to identify and quantity greenhouse gas emissions by organizations such as the EPA and the GHG Protocol. The process of gathering data needed for each type of emissions will vary by company. The EPA also offers a free Simplified GHG Emissions Calculator tool that can be used to get started.

2. How is refrigerant leakage calculated?
   For corporate-controlled facilities, start by inventorying the types of equipment containing refrigerants (e.g. air conditioning units, chillers, refrigerators, etc). Guidance on how to

calculate leakage, as well as, a list of default emissions factors can be found in the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Inventory Guidance for Direct Fugitive Emissions.

CARBON ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. EPA Simplified GHG Emissions Calculator
2. EPA Scope 1 and 2 Inventory Guidance
3. EPA Greenhouse Gas Inventory Guidance for Direct Fugitive Emissions
4. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol for Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Accounting and Reporting Standard
5. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol Technical Guidance for Calculating Scope 3 Emissions (v1.0)
6. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol Corporate Standard
7. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol Scope 2 Guidance
8. EPA GHG Emission Factors Hub

JOBSITE WELLNESS

The goal of this category is to ensure the wellness of a contractor's employees. Jobsites can be dangerous places and the materials and operational practices that we use to construct buildings can be harmful if not handled properly. This section is designed to help ensure that the sustainability of our buildings does not come at the expense of the health of our employees.

Good

1. Develop a jobsite wellness plan that includes the following categories: air, nourishment, hygiene, fitness, mental wellness, and severe weather exposure. (Reported Projects)
2. Check-in with teams periodically to adjust any deficiencies of the jobsite wellness plan based on feedback. (Reported Projects)
3. Share an example(s) of a jobsite wellness plan with annual reporting. (Reported Projects)

Better

1. Provide sit / stand desks or multiple height work surfaces for employees (Reported Projects)
2. Provide MERV 8 filtration or better for jobsite offices (Reported Projects)
3. Implement at least **4** additional measures from the list of wellness options below. (Reported Projects)

Best

1. Implement at least **10** measures from the list of wellness options below. (Reported Projects)

Wellness Options:

a. Provide hand-cleaning access/amenities throughout the jobsite for the duration of the project.
b. Provide natural elements within the office / trailer (e.g. live plants, landscape artwork, added windows, etc.)
c. Provide task lights with adjustable color temperature
d. Provide a shared quiet space or elements to improve acoustics
e. Procure trailers with units that can accept MERV 13 filters or higher and use/regularly replace MERV 13 filters
f. Implement ongoing IAQ monitoring for the jobsite office (CO2, Humidity, PM2.5, PM10)
g. Provide covered eating areas for employees away from desk
h. Provide reusable cups, plates, silverware for employees
i. Provide sunscreen that meets Environmental Working Group criteria

j. If meals or snacks are provided, include healthy food and drink options (e.g. fresh fruits/vegetables, no-added sugar drinks/food, etc.)
k. Implement a daily stretch and flex program including contractor employees and trades.
l. Administer a wellness survey to project teams. Address any deficiencies based on feedback.
m. Commit to AGC's Culture of Care
n. Other relevant innovative solution (Share a summary or case study with the SCL group)

JOBSITE WELLNESS FAQs

1. What if a project does not have a dedicated jobsite office/trailer (e.g., interior buildout)?
   If a particular project will not have dedicated space for contractor employees, all efforts should be made to implement as many practices outlined in the tiers as possible. A company may still count that project towards the 30% project reporting goal if the other categories are pursued for that project.

JOBSITE WELLNESS ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. **Sample Project Wellness Plan (Coming Soon)**
2. Sample Wellness Survey
3. **Best Practices (Coming soon)**

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The goal of this category is to outline steps Contractors can take to minimize construction and demolition waste and maximize waste salvage and recycling. It is understood that each construction project is unique, and project-specific waste management plans are required to ensure success on a project-by-project basis.

Good

1. Develop a project-specific waste management plan and conduct a waste management kickoff meeting before construction. (Reported Projects)
2. Divert a minimum of 50% waste or generate 15 pounds / sq ft or less of construction & demolition waste. (Reported Projects for reporting period)
3. Record estimated weight or volume of materials that are reused on site or salvaged for reuse on other projects by subcontractors or vendors. (Reported Projects for reporting period)

Better

1. Have a company-wide waste diversion strategy. (Company-wide)
2. Divert a minimum of 65% waste or generate 10 pounds / sq ft or less of construction & demolition waste. (Reported Projects for reporting period)
3. Where salvageable materials are available, implement a salvage assessment/plan in collaboration with key parties before demolition begins. (Reported Projects)

Best

1. Divert a minimum of 75% waste or generate 7.5 pounds / sq ft or less of construction & demolition waste. (Reported Projects for reporting period)
2. Send waste to a 3rd party certified facility (RCI or equivalent) where available, or advocate the receiving facility become 3rd party certified if not currently. (Reported Projects)
3. Develop a surplus reduction plan with specific strategies for each trade/material. (Reported Projects)

WASTE MANAGEMENT FAQs

1. How should Alternative Daily Cover (ADC) be addressed?

In areas where ADC can be identified in reporting, it should be treated as landfilled waste. In areas where ADC cannot be identified in reporting, the diversion thresholds outlined above would increase by 10% per tier in order to qualify (Good = 60% with ADC, Better = 75% with ADC, and Best = 85% with ADC).

2. How should demolition materials be addressed?
   For projects that have demolition and/or salvaged materials, reported values should include appropriate accounting for these materials – whether landfilled or diverted – along with waste generated in construction.

WASTE MANAGEMENT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. **Waste Management Plan Template (Coming Soon)**
2. **Waste Management Kick-off Meeting Agenda Template (Coming Soon)**
3. **Example Waste diversion strategy statement (Coming Soon)**
4. **Salvage Assessment/Plan Template (Coming Soon)**
5. **Surplus Reduction Plan Template (Coming Soon)**

WATER MANAGEMENT

The goal of this category is to promote responsible use of water and protection of waterways. It is understood that each construction project is unique, and project-specific water plans are required to ensure success on a project-by-project basis. This category has been created to give all contractors an ability to participate in this section of the commitment, regardless of their sphere of influence.

Good

1. Create a project water plan for risks and opportunities prior to construction start (Reported Projects)
2. Verify regulatory control measures are being implemented (Company-wide)
3. Establish a company-wide goal of zero water-related incidents/fees/fines and measure and report annually. (Company-wide)

Better

1. Integrate trade partners and stakeholders into your water plan (Reported Projects)
2. Identify potential for one project-specific water-saving, -reuse, or best practice strategy. (Reported Projects)
3. Document and share best practices internally and share a summary or case study with the SCL group.

Best

1. Implement at least one project-specific water-saving, -reuse, or best practice strategy. (Reported Projects)
2. Track potable water use for construction. (Reported Projects)
3. Develop a project-by-project or company-wide plan to offset estimated impacts of construction water use for all projects (e.g. Regional certifications such as Salmon-Safe Contractor, Water Restoration Credit purchases, etc.). (Company-wide)

WATER MANAGEMENT FAQs

1. What if a project does not have any construction-related water use (e.g. interior buildout)?
   If construction-related water use or management is not applicable to a particular project, a company may still count that project towards the 30% project reporting goal if the other categories are pursued for that project.

WATER MANAGEMENT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Project Water Plan template
2. **Sample Compliance Log (Coming Soon)**
3. **Water savings ideas (Coming Soon)**

MATERIALS

The goal of this category is to outline steps General Contractors can take to advance healthy and sustainable materials on projects. Each contractor has varying levels of influence with materials, from almost no control with design-bid-build, to moderate control with self-perform, and significant control with design-build or other integrated project delivery projects.

Definition: Healthy and Sustainable Materials are those that minimize adverse impacts on human health and ecological systems while promoting social equity and transparency regarding their ingredients and impacts. Healthy Materials are, as much as possible, harmless during their manufacture, installation, application, operation, maintenance, and end of life processes.

Good

1. Influence selection of materials via a healthy and sustainable materials purchasing plan or strategy statement. (Reported Projects)
2. Provide resources to find healthy and sustainable materials internally to procurement teams. (Reported Projects)
3. Request Type III product-specific/project-specific EPDs and quantities for concrete, steel, precast, gypsum, framing, and insulation materials as applicable for projects. (Reported Projects)

Better

1. Identify and substitute at least two materials, by project, with healthier and more sustainable materials than originally proposed. (Reported Projects)
2. Require Type III product-specific/project-specific EPDs and quantities for concrete, steel, precast, gypsum, framing, and insulation materials as applicable for projects. (Reported Projects)
3. Share a summary of successes and challenges with the SCL group annually.

Best

1. Identify at least two material types, company-wide, that can be recommended for replacement with healthier and more sustainable materials. (Company-wide)
2. Evaluate embodied carbon as part of the decision-making / procurement process for concrete, steel, precast, gypsum, framing, and insulation materials. (Reported Projects)
3. Share your experience publicly as an educational tool for others (e.g. published case study, external presentations, website, etc.) (Company-wide)

MATERIALS FAQs

1. What resources can be used to find healthy and sustainable materials?
   There are many easy to access resources to research and find healthy and sustainable materials. A list of commonly used resources can be found here,
2. What is embodied carbon and how do I evaluate it?
   Embodied carbon is the sum of greenhouse gas emissions released during the following life-cycle stages: raw material extraction, transportation, manufacturing, construction, maintenance, renovation, and end-of-life for a product or system. Embodied carbon is reported as global warming potential (GWP) and is measured relative to the impact of one molecule of carbon dioxide, usually over a 100-year time-frame.

   Embodied carbon can be evaluated for a specific product, an industry average for a material across multiple manufacturers, and at a whole-building level. An Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) transparently reports objective, comparable and third-party verified data about products and services' environmental performances from a lifecycle perspective.

   Many manufacturers have already developed EPDs. EPDs can be found through online databases, at the manufacturer's website, and through direct request. More information about the different types of EPDs can be found here.

3. If a manufacturer does not have an EPD developed, what can I do?
   If a specific material does not have an EPD developed yet, it is important to advocate for further transparency by requesting they create one. In the absence of a Type III product-specific EPD, a whole-building lifecycle analysis (WBLCA) can still be performed using an industry average for that product. However, there will not be any opportunity for a reduction strategy for that product.

MATERIALS ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. **Sample Sustainable materials purchasing strategy statement (Coming Soon)**
2. **List of Healthy & Sustainable resources (Coming Soon)**
3. Building Transparency.org (EC3 – Free embodied carbon tool)
4. Athena Impact Estimator (Free whole-building LCA tool)
5. ZGF Concrete LCA tool – Free download
6. Architecture 2030 Carbon Smart Materials Palette