



THE
WELL
BUILDING STANDARD®

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WELL Building Standard®

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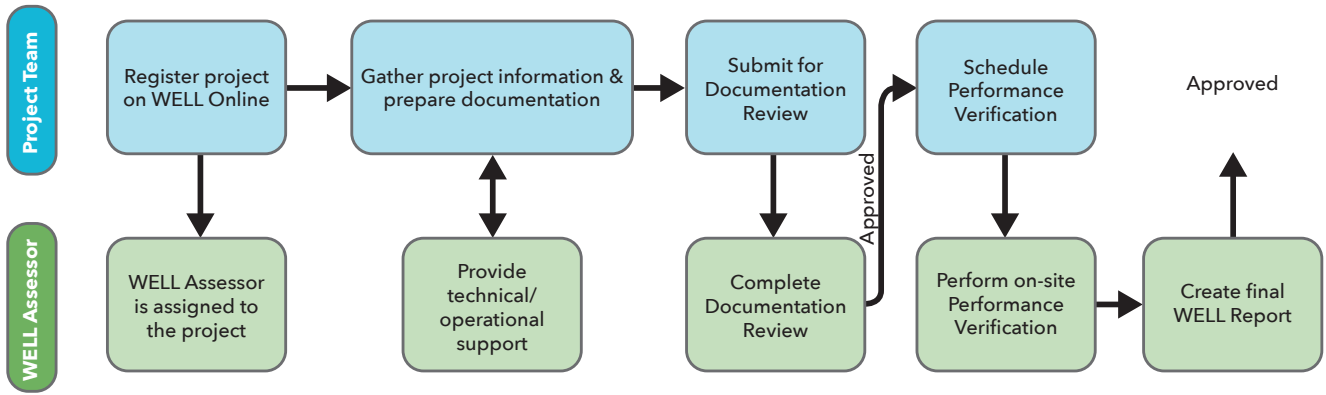
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Congratulations on your decision to pursue WELL certification for your project! This guidebook describes the steps in WELL certification process.

The figure below outlines the steps of successfully achieving WELL.



Each step is covered in greater detail in the following pages.

REGISTRATION

Registration signifies your intent to pursue WELL certification. WELL Online (projects.wellcertified.com) is the official online registration application and project management system for WELL. Registration requires submitting basic information about the project and declaring the project path by indicating the primary project space type and project scope as described in the previous section. At this time, the project typology must be selected for the project. The typology is based on the primary space type of the project and determines whether a given feature is applicable to the project. Refer to the WELL Building Standard for more information on the different typologies.

Upon registration, projects must complete documentation submission and schedule Performance Verification within a certain timeframe:

- Projects utilizing WELL have five years from the date of registration
- Projects utilizing a WELL pilot standard have three years from the date of registration

If a project does not submit documentation within this period, its registration will expire. If project teams anticipate that they will have difficulty meeting this deadline, they must request an extension from IWBI at least one year prior to the registration expiration date and submit documentation explaining why a longer period of time is necessary.

A project will be reviewed under the version of WELL or WELL pilot standard that is in place on the date the project is registered, unless the project team elects to proceed under a subsequently released version.

WELL Assessor

After registration, the Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI) will assign a WELL Assessor to the project. The WELL Assessor is the third-party certification entity responsible for assessing/reviewing your project. Before documentation is submitted for review, the WELL Assessor can assist in answering technical questions about WELL features. After submission for certification, the WELL Assessor is responsible for both the documentation review phase of WELL Certification and for Performance Verification activities.

Project Team Roles

Team members will have distinct responsibilities throughout the certification process, as described below.

Project Administrator

Project administrators act as project manager and oversees the WELL process. The project administrator is the primary point of contact on the project and must be copied on all correspondence with GBCI. This individual will also be the recipient of a comprehensive WELL report following Documentation Review and Performance Verification, as well as the WELL building award package.

The project administrator can be a WELL Accredited Professional (WELL AP), the building owner, or another designated representative of the project team.

This individual is responsible for ensuring that all project documentation is complete and accurate before submitting for review. The project administrator is ultimately responsible for the overall quality of the documents submitted and is expected to complete a thorough quality control check of all documentation and forms prior to submission for review.

Owner

Owners are responsible for authorizing registration of the project and will be required to validate various documents used to demonstrate that WELL features are satisfied.

An owner can be an individual property owner or a representative who is delegated responsibility by an entity that owns the property. Owners have the authority to hold and control project-relevant property and to authorize decisions pertaining to that property.

In circumstances where multiple owners hold rights over a property, a single owner must be identified as the authorized decision-maker for purposes of WELL. In such cases, the project team must submit a Confirmation of Primary Owner's Authority Form, which will be made available upon request.

Additional Signatories

Some WELL documents will require validation by the appropriate professional overseeing the relevant aspect of design, construction or operations. Therefore, architects, contractors, and mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) engineers are required to provide specific declarations and/or calculations pertaining to the project.

WELL Accredited Professional (WELL AP)

The WELL AP credential recognizes building industry professionals who are knowledgeable of the conceptual and applied frameworks of WELL, and are experienced in its application on registered and certified WELL projects. WELL APs can help guide projects to successful certification or compliance awards. Project teams are not required to include a WELL AP, but having a WELL AP as part of a project team will help to address all necessary aspects of WELL.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

While a core tenet of WELL is performance verification and achievement of measurable criteria, it also requires that project teams provide documentation as evidence that certain WELL features have been met. These documentation requirements are summarized below.

Required Document Types

All documents that the project team is responsible for providing must be submitted via WELL Online. The type of document required to verify each feature is described in the WELL Building Standard.

1. Annotated Documents

Annotated documents refer to existing project documents that are marked up to provide additional information to indicate how WELL features and constituent parts have been met. Types of annotated documents include the following:

- A. Design drawings (with pertinent information marked or highlighted)
- B. Operations schedules (with time log templates, if appropriate)
- C. Policy documents (e.g., employee handbooks)
- D. Other materials, including narratives and balancing reports.

2. Letters of Assurance

Separate letters of assurance must be submitted by the appropriate professional overseeing the implementation of a specific WELL feature and its parts during design, construction or operations. Letters of assurance will be required from the following licensed professionals to confirm that the requirements of WELL features have been met:

- A. Architects
- B. Contractors
- C. Engineers

3. General Documents

Both annotated documents and letters of assurance are tied to specific feature requirements. The documents listed below, however, are not linked to the verification of a specific part, but are instead required as a general document for the certification or compliance process at large. These documents do not need to be annotated but are used to inform GBCI of details on the project.

Required general documents include the following:

- A. Representative floor plans
- B. Mechanical drawings
- C. Narrative describing the project in general and listing the attempted features

Documentation Submission, Review and Approval

[WELL Online](#) is the official online registration application and project management system for WELL Certification and compliance. This online system is used to house all documentation related to a WELL project, and to submit information for review by the WELL Assessor. The project must successfully complete the Documentation Review

phase (marked as approved in WELL Online) before Performance Verification can be scheduled.

Documents can be uploaded to [WELL Online](#) as they are prepared. Once all documents are uploaded, the project administrator is expected to perform a thorough quality check before submitting the documentation for review in WELL Online.

A first round of Documentation Review by the WELL Assessor will follow documentation submission. The WELL Assessor will respond with his/her preliminary review within 20-25 business days, indicating which of the features the documentation requirements have met, and indicating what additional information is needed. If all documents are found to be satisfactory, then the project team will be able to proceed to the next steps.

The project team will be notified if any submitted documents are found to be inaccurate or unsatisfactory, or if further documentation is necessary. In that case, the project team will have an opportunity to correct existing documents or submit further documentation for a second round of review. The WELL Assessor will respond with the results of the second round of review within 20-25 business days. If more than two rounds of review are needed before all documentation is found to be satisfactory, additional fees will apply. Any additional rounds of review will also be completed within 20-25 business days.

The project team will be notified via [WELL Online](#) when all documents have been reviewed and approved, at which time the project team can schedule Performance Verification. Features approved during Documentation Review are subject to inspection during Performance Verification.

PERFORMANCE VERIFICATION

Performance Verification entails a site visit during which a WELL Assessor performs or oversees tests and inspections to verify that all applicable requirements of WELL features have been met.

Scheduling Performance Verification

For a project seeking to achieve WELL Certification, certain conditions must be met before the project can schedule Performance Verification. These vary based on the project type and are described in Table 2. For projects utilizing WELL pilot standards, there may be additional criteria as outlined in the introduction to the pilot standard.

1. All documents for which the project team is responsible must be submitted, reviewed and approved in WELL Online through the Documentation Review process.
2. At least one month must pass since the space’s certificate of occupancy was issued.
3. A minimum of 50% of expected occupancy must be achieved in the project.

Table 2: Conditions Necessary to Schedule Performance Verification

PATH	DOCUMENTATION APPROVED	ONE MONTH FROM CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY	50% OCCUPANCY
New and Existing Buildings New and Existing Interiors	Yes ✓	Yes ✓	Yes ✓
Core and Shell	Yes ✓	No ✗	No ✗
Retail Pilot Program Education Facilities Pilot Program Restaurant Pilot Program Commercial Kitchen Pilot Program	Yes ✓	Yes ✓	No ✗
Multifamily Residential Pilot Program	Yes ✓	No ✗	No ✗

On-Site Measurements and Inspections

Performance Verification is performed or overseen by the WELL Assessor. Depending on the building size, this may require the WELL Assessor (and testing organization, if applicable) to be at the site for multiple days in order to fully validate the project’s design documentation via inspections and spot-checks, and to complete all on-site performance tests to confirm adherence to WELL requirements.

During Performance Verification, an individual with authorized access to all areas of the building must be present so that performance tests and inspections may be conducted in any area, including mechanical and tenant spaces, grounds and the roof.

Testing and measurement during Performance Verification will be completed according to sampling protocols set by IWBI based on the size and typology of the project, and some collected samples will be sent to a third-party laboratory for analysis. The WELL Assessor will evaluate all applicable environmental parameters in accordance with WELL, including, for example:

1. Air quality (e.g., organic and inorganic gases, and particulates)
2. Water quality (e.g., dissolved chemicals and suspended solids)
3. Light attributes (e.g., color quality, intensity and spectral power distribution)
4. Thermal considerations (e.g., ambient and radiant temperature, air speed and humidity)
5. Acoustic elements (e.g., decibel levels and reverberation)

Refer to the WELL Performance Verification guidebook for details on all activities executed during Performance Verification.

Any WELL feature and its parts are subject to verification on-site by the WELL Assessor during Performance Verification, including those accounted for by documentation. This means that the WELL Assessor will perform spot-checks and confirm on-site that certain features reflected in the submitted documents are in fact satisfied.

WELL REPORT

The WELL report will provide a feature-by-feature assessment of whether requirements of WELL features pursued by the project were approved. A comprehensive WELL report will be available on [WELL Online](#) within 40-45 business days of the site visit. This includes inspection details, analysis results and the status of documents previously submitted by the project team for approval. If the project has not met WELL criteria in any area, the WELL report will indicate where deficiencies exist.

Once the WELL report is issued, the project team is required to either accept their WELL report via [WELL Online](#), or initiate curative actions or an appeal within 180 calendar days. If the WELL report indicates a pass, then the project will be issued the applicable certification level or compliance as described in the WELL report. If, within 180 calendar days after issuance of the WELL report, the project has neither affirmatively accepted the WELL report on [WELL Online](#) nor initiated a curative action or appeal, the project will be deemed to have accepted the WELL report as final.

AWARD & CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT

Certification Award

Projects that have satisfied the requirements of WELL and have accepted the WELL report will receive a WELL building award package from IWBI.

The WELL building award package will contain the official award letter, the WELL Certification plaque and other relevant documents. IWBI will also provide sample materials to assist the project in its promotion of successful WELL Certification.

The WELL Certified plaque will indicate the level of certification and the year certified, and may only be displayed at the site of the WELL Certified project. For additional details, please view the [IWBI Trademark Policy and Branding Guidelines](#).

Continued Engagement

In order to maintain status as a WELL Certified project prior to recertification, there are specific ongoing requirements. Certain features may require projects to provide ongoing records of the following:

- A. Results of post-occupancy surveys
- B. Proof of maintenance (e.g., logs of cleaning schedules and filter replacement)
- C. Ongoing environmental parameter measurements (e.g., air and water quality)

These features generally require submission to GBCI for review on an annual basis. To remain in good standing, projects must submit the documents within 15 months of certification and then every 12 months thereafter. Failure to provide these documents within this time frame may result in an additional fee assessed at recertification. If the ongoing records are not submitted at all by recertification, then in addition to the fee, the project will be ineligible to pursue these features for the following certification period. For details on what is required in these documents, please refer to the relevant features in the WELL Building Standard.

INNOVATIONS & ALTERNATIVE ADHERENCE PATHS

WELL features create linkages between elements of building design and occupant health, wellness and comfort. WELL ultimately seeks to establish a set of universally applicable features that are feasible across all building types and contexts. However, the various ways in which the built environment impacts health across diverse contexts are multiple and overlapping, and there are paths to healthful construction and design that may be uncovered during implementation of the current version of WELL.

In recognition of the complexity involved in fully exhausting all dimensions of health through the built environment, and of the challenges that may be involved in meeting requirements as outlined, WELL provides opportunities for creativity through two processes:

1. Alternative adherence paths
2. Innovation features

Both approved alternative adherence paths and innovation features are submitted to GBCI for review and are approved at GBCI's sole discretion. If proposals are denied, projects may appeal this decision by following the protocol described below.

Alternative Adherence Paths

WELL allows for innovative, alternate solutions for meeting requirements through the alternative adherence path process, as long as proposals still meet the intent of the requirement and are supported by cited scientific, medical and industry research. Project teams may propose an alternative for any requirement of WELL by submitting a completed alternative adherence path for review.

These forms are used specifically for proposing alternate means to meeting existing WELL features. Each form pertains to one feature, and there is no limit on the number of alternative adherence path forms that can be submitted per project.

While requests for alternative adherence paths will be kept private, summaries may be published. If alternative adherence paths have broad application, the strategies described in the application may be incorporated as official pathways of feature adherence in future versions of WELL.

Project teams may submit an alternative adherence path proposal for pre-approval before or after registration. Each project receives three alternative adherence path submissions at no additional cost; further alternative adherence path forms may be submitted for a fee.

The alternative adherence path form is available on www.wellcertified.com/resources.

Innovation Features

Innovation features pave the way for project teams to develop unique strategies for creating a healthy environment. The features can relate to any of the WELL Concepts. For a given project, innovation features must either address a novel concept or strategy not already included in WELL, or may include implementation of the requirements in an existing WELL feature that is designated as not applicable to the project's typology..

Innovation features must be supported by sufficient rationale based on cited scientific, medical and industry research. To request input on Innovation Feature proposals ahead of the Documentation Review submission, the innovation proposal may be submitted as an alternative adherence path using the process described above.

WELL Features Addenda and Interpretations

WELL addenda incorporate changes and improvements to the WELL Building Standard and help to clarify, correct, interpret, or provide alternative language. Addenda will include alternative adherence path proposals and innovation features without project identifying information.

International Projects and Standards

Projects registered in countries other than the United States may find some challenges based on local regulations and standards that differ from those outlined in WELL. In those instances a project will have two options:

1. Adhere to the requirements cited in WELL.
2. Petition IWBI for the use of equivalent requirements within a standard that is more relevant to the country where a project is located, along with evidence of equivalency. If IWBI approves use of a new requirement as sufficiently equivalent to a WELL requirement in a given country, the new requirements will be incorporated into WELL features addenda and interpretations, as an alternative adherence path available for other projects in the pertinent country to use.

CURATIVE ACTIONS AND APPEALS

The WELL report will outline any failed performance criteria or other requirements.

As previously stated, after the WELL report is issued, the project owner has 180 calendar days to either accept the WELL report, initiate curative action or file an appeal. Curative action is available to project teams that wish to enact curative efforts to address unmet criteria and request to schedule follow-up Performance Verification. Appeals are available to project teams that wish to contest findings of the WELL report or attempt new features.

Fixed baseline fees are associated with curative action requests and appeals. Additional fees apply depending on the WELL features in question, and whether performance re-testing is necessary to confirm compliance with WELL requirements. Visit WELLCertified.com for a current schedule of fees and for further details on the curative actions or appeals processes.

Curative Actions

To pursue a curative action path for any features with unmet requirements, a curative action plan must be submitted within 180 calendar days after issuance of the WELL report. The plan must be signed by the project owner and outline steps for addressing unmet features.

The curative action plan will be reviewed by the WELL Assessor and results will be provided within 20-25 business days. If the curative action plan is accepted, the project team must then enact curative actions as outlined and schedule another Performance Verification with their WELL Assessor.

The features that are re-tested during the follow-up Performance Verification will vary based on which features are impacted during the execution of the curative action plan. For example, projects that fail to meet requirements concerning microorganisms in a Water feature may address this problem with the addition of chlorine. By doing so, however, they could risk exceeding the chlorine limits of another feature in Water.

After follow-up Performance Verification has been completed, an updated WELL report will be created and shared with the project administrator.

Performance Verification can be repeated (for additional fees) following additional curative actions should the WELL report resulting from the follow-up Performance Verification again indicate a failure to achieve certification or compliance.

Appeals

Project teams may (for a fee) challenge any findings of the WELL report or submit new features for review by submitting an appeal application. The appeal application allows the submission of supplementary information and allows for an additional round of review. Each appeal is applicable to one feature; a separate appeal must be submitted for each feature being challenged. All appeals must be submitted within 180 calendar days after the date of issuance of the WELL report.

An appeal must provide an explanation of the basis of the appeal and identify suspected errors. Upon receiving the appeal, GBCI will respond with an appeal review report within 20-25 business days.

Like the WELL report, a project may either accept or appeal the review report. Projects are limited to one subsequent appeal for each feature, which must be submitted within 90 calendar days of the date of issuance of the appeal review report being challenged.

PRECERTIFICATION

This is an optional review pathway available to all project typologies for a fee. The Precertification review is focused on the intended design, construction, and operational strategies for the project. WELL Precertification allows project owners to demonstrate health and wellness in the built environment, market the proposed wellness features of a project to potential tenants looking to occupy the WELL-certified space, and determine which features the project is likely to achieve during the full WELL certification review.

RECERTIFICATION

WELL Certification (for New and Existing Buildings and for New and Existing Interiors) is valid for three years. During this three year time period, annual performance data must be submitted for the select features that require more frequent reporting.

In order to maintain a current certification, a project must file an application for recertification on [WELL Online](#) no later than three years after the date on which the project was awarded its initial certification. Filing an application for recertification extends the validity of the project's original certification period for six months, during which time the project must satisfactorily complete the recertification process to determine that the building continues to perform to the WELL standard

If a project does not file an application for recertification before the expiration of the three-year original certification period, or fails to successfully obtain recertification within 42 months of receiving the initial certification, the project's WELL Certification will expire. Upon expiration of a project's WELL Certification, the project must immediately discontinue all use and display of the WELL Certified plaque, trademark and logo, and must not indicate or imply that the project is WELL Certified. The project will be removed from IWBI's list of certified projects.

A building's certification may be compromised if WELL features have not been properly maintained or if the quality of the environment has declined below the thresholds required in WELL. During recertification, projects can elect to submit additional WELL features to improve their score and achieve a higher level of certification.

For the first recertification event following initial certification, a project can elect to be reviewed under either the version of WELL for which it achieved initial certification or any subsequently released version. For all subsequent recertifications, a project will be reviewed under the version of the rating system that is in place 12 months prior to expiration of their certification. If they so choose, a project team may elect to be recertified under a more recent version of the standard.

Projects may preemptively begin the recertification process before the three-year period is up. All of the rules and timelines regarding acceptance of the WELL report apply normally. The new results from Performance Verification and the WELL report supersede the results from the prior certification.

WELL Core and Shell certified projects provide healthy and productive amenity spaces to their occupants and enable tenants to pursue WELL Certification for their interior spaces. WELL Core and Shell projects may recertify to verify the ongoing performance of amenity spaces and core elements of the building. After projects certify through Core and Shell, the interior spaces are primed for WELL for New and Existing Interiors Certification.

USE OF PROJECT INFORMATION

WELL requires the submission of extensive information related to each project. Collected information typically includes project and owner identifying information, attestations, narratives, data, calculations, maps, drawings, specifications and other design, construction and operational-related information. This information may contain personal or proprietary information, as well as valuable intellectual property including copyrighted materials and/or trademarks. By submitting this information, each project grants IWBI and its affiliates and their respective employees, agents, representatives and subcontractors a limited, non-exclusive and non-revocable license to access and view all information that is submitted in the application as necessary to perform an assessment.

IWBI also uses project data to educate and provide resources for WELL project teams and others, showcase project strategies and promote WELL on a global scale. WELL-registered and certified projects are, by default, considered “public” projects and, as such, they are included in IWBI’s public WELL project directory. Inclusion in this directory allows the general public and members of the media to look up specific project listings and details, including the following: project name, project address, project typology, registration date, identity of the owner, owner organization type, project team information, project gross square footage, date of certification and level of certification achieved, among other project identifying information. With the exception of information provided to IWBI’s and its affiliates’ employees, agents, representatives and subcontractors, IWBI and its affiliates will not distribute or publish any submitted plans, drawings or schematics pertaining to any project without permission.

All public projects also benefit from publicity opportunities: IWBI may use project data to create case studies highlighting a project’s features, reference a project on the website or to the media, or create other derivative works. Information that may be used for articles, project profiles or similar promotional pieces may include service providers, project team members, promotional or other project photographs, project strategies for certification, or quotations from team members.

A project may opt-out of the WELL project directory and publicity opportunities by electing to be a “private project” at the time of registration. See [WELL Online](#) for specific instructions in this regard. A private project means that the project name, street address and identity of the owner will not appear within the WELL project directory. Certain other non-project identifying information may be disclosed, including, but not limited to, the city and state in which the project is located and the total project square footage. All private projects that achieve WELL Certification or WELL Compliance will be prompted upon issuance of award, if any, to transition to public status. A project that wishes to remain a private project will need to re-confirm its private status at the time of certification.

For so long as a project maintains its election as a “private project”, the project cannot market or represent itself to the general public as having applied for certification or compliance, or as being certified or compliant, and no intellectual property including the WELL certification or compliance trademarks may be utilized or displayed in relation to the project. Project owners may change the privacy setting for a project at any time before acceptance of the final award, using functionality in [WELL Online](#).

Further development of the WELL program depends upon the collection, analysis and distribution of information pertaining to WELL design, construction and performance. IWBI and its affiliates may make internal use of any information that is submitted to IWBI – whether by a public or private project – including, and not limited to, project performance data, and may publish this information to third parties, including the general public, in aggregated non-identifying form.

GLOSSARY

Alternative Adherence Path – Alternative solutions for meeting the intent of any WELL feature requirement. Projects may submit an alternative adherence path proposal to IWBI to replace any requirement in WELL. Fees apply.

Curative Action Plan – Document that outlines strategies that project teams will employ to address any unmet criteria as identified in a WELL report. These plans must be submitted to IWBI within 180 calendar days of receiving the WELL report, and must detail a specific and feasible plan of action.

Feature – A set of requirements in the WELL Building Standard with a specific health intent. Features are classified as either mandatory Preconditions or as Optimizations that offer more flexibility.

Innovation Features – Features which allow for project teams to submit ideas for new features under a certain concept. The proposals for these features must address a novel aspect relevant to the concept, with robust supporting literature from health and medical research. Innovation features for a given project may include implementation of the requirements in an existing WELL feature that is designated as not applicable to the project's typology.

Letter of Appeal – Document that outlines a project team's disagreement with any finding of the WELL report, or of any decision regarding proposals for alternative adherence paths, curative actions, or innovation features. Appeals must be submitted to IWBI within 90 calendar days of the date of issuance of the WELL report or the appeal review report, as applicable.

WELL Accredited Professional (WELL AP) – A professional who has extensive industry experience and knowledge of the WELL process. Such professionals have successfully completed IWBI's WELL AP exam, and may be hired by a project team as consultants to guide successful certification or compliance award.

WELL Assessor – An independent professional who conducts on-site performance tests, inspections, and spot-checks, as well as Documentation Review in order to evaluate a project's eligibility for WELL Certification. These professionals are trained to understand proper adherence to testing protocols for evaluating WELL performance criteria.

Performance Verification – A site visit where a WELL Assessor conducts performance tests, visual inspections and spot-checks, and also includes follow-up analysis of collected data and samples from the site.

WELL Features Addenda and Interpretations – Addenda incorporate changes and improvements to the WELL Building Standard to help clarify, correct, interpret or provide alternative language.

WELL Online (projects.wellcertified.com) – Official online registration application and project management system for WELL. Project administrators must register projects on WELL Online, and may delegate responsibilities over specific features to other project team members. All documents must be uploaded onto WELL Online for review and approval.

WELL report – Comprehensive report of the project which includes a feature-by-feature summary of whether or not project teams successfully provided documentation to verify that each feature has been satisfied, or if the project has successfully performed to measurable criteria relevant for specific features. Provided via [WELL Online](#) for the project administrator to view.



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