



NGBS Green Certification: Quick Start Guide

The ICC 700 *National Green Building Standard*™ (NGBS) is approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as an American National Standard. The NGBS provides criteria for rating the environmental impact of design and construction practices to achieve conformance with specified performance levels for residential buildings. NGBS Green certification, issued by Home Innovation Research Labs, is accepted as demonstration of NGBS conformance by government entities, GSEs, lenders, and institutional investors.

What Buildings Can be NGBS Green Certified?

New and renovated buildings where people live can be certified using the NGBS. These include:

- Single-family homes, townhouses, duplexes, and quads
- Multifamily buildings (no height limit)
- Mixed-use buildings, where the commercial/retail space is <49% of the gross floor area
- Buildings being converted to residential
- Boarding houses, congregate living facilities, and group homes
- Hotels, motels, convents, and monasteries
- Dorms, fraternities, sororities, and other student housing
- Assisted living facilities and other senior housing

What is Required for NGBS Green Certification?

The NGBS is a comprehensive green certification. NGBS-compliant buildings must meet the minimum point requirements for each of the six categories of green building practices within the NGBS. Practices can be design-based, product or system based, or construction-related.

The NGBS has both Mandatory and Voluntary practices. Mandatory practices must be successfully incorporated into the building – there are no exceptions. [See [Builder's Resource Guide](#) Appendix C] Mandatory practices typically do not earn points toward certification. Voluntary practices earn points toward certification and their point values vary generally based on the difficulty and/or cost to incorporate the practice.

Buildings seeking NGBS Green certification must be inspected twice – once before drywall is installed and again after construction is complete – by a Home Innovation-accredited [NGBS Green Verifier](#) who serves as an independent third-party to verify the building's NGBS conformance. For multifamily buildings, there are NGBS practices that must be visually inspected by a Verifier in every apartment/dwelling unit pre-drywall for the building to be deemed compliant. Multi-story buildings may need more than one rough inspection visit by the Verifier depending on the drywall installation schedule.

Each time a Verifier completes a rough or final inspection, the Verifier will submit a verification report to Home Innovation for review and approval. Once Home Innovation's review is complete, the final verification report accepted, a completed client agreement is on file with the necessary proof of insurance, and the certification fee is paid, an NGBS Green certificate is issued to the client.

If all the requirement documentation and fees are paid before the final verification report is submitted, Home Innovation will typically issue the final NGBS Green certificate within a few business days.

How Does a Building Qualify for NGBS Green Certification?

The design and construction requirements for NGBS compliance are included within the NGBS which is available [here](#) for free download or purchase. An NGBS Green Verifier is required to review building plans and documentation and visually inspect any building seeking NGBS Green certification to ensure the building is compliant and meets all certification requirements. An NGBS Green certificate of compliance is issued after the Verifier submits a final and complete verification report to Home Innovation.

While Verifiers can help clients determine if their proposed building specs and plans are compliant, you can also score your building using one of the free, downloadable NGBS Green Scoring Tools available [here](#). Please be sure to download the correct version of the Scoring Tool from the drop-down menu.

How Do I Find an NGBS Green Verifier?

Home Innovation-accredited Verifiers are listed [here](#). We recommend adding a Verifier to the project team as early in the design stage as possible to streamline and simplify the certification process.

What Other Documents are Necessary?

Builders or developers must complete an NGBS Green client agreement and submit proof that they hold the requisite amount of professional liability insurance. More information is available in the NGBS Green [Builder's Resource Guide](#).

What if Construction Is Complete?

NGBS Green certification requires a Verifier to confirm the building's compliance and typically requires an inspection for each apartment or home before drywall installation. This requirement is a cornerstone of the program and rarely waived. If a developer or builder believes they have unique extenuating circumstances they may file an Appeal, however, there is no guarantee that a building seeking an appeal will be permitted to proceed.

If a building developer/owner would like to seek NGBS Green certification for a building that was recently completed or is at any stage past the drywall installation, they need to file an appeal to waive the requirement for a rough inspection. The non-refundable appeals fee is \$1,000. Home Innovation's Appeals Process is explained in the [Builder's Resource Guide](#), *Reconciling Differences: Local Code vs. NGBS Requirements*. After the fee is paid, Home Innovation will schedule a conference call between the Appeals Board and the applicant. During the call, the Appeals Board will seek to learn how Home Innovation can determine the pre-drywall elements of the building are NGBS Green compliant in order for the certification process to proceed.

Having a Verifier participate on the call is not required but can be helpful. Likewise, it is recommended that the project team score the building using the appropriate NGBS Green Scoring Tool prior to the call to facilitate the discussion and ensure the building was designed at a sufficiently high performance level to warrant certification consideration.

How Much Does Certification Cost?

Registration is free. Certification fees are listed [here](#). Verifiers set and charge their own fees for verification services, which are separate from/in addition to the NGBS Green certification fees that are paid to Home Innovation.

How Long Does Certification Take?

Home Innovation is typically able to process the NGBS Green certificate within a few business days if all paperwork is complete, the certification fee is paid, and the final verification report is complete and accurate.