

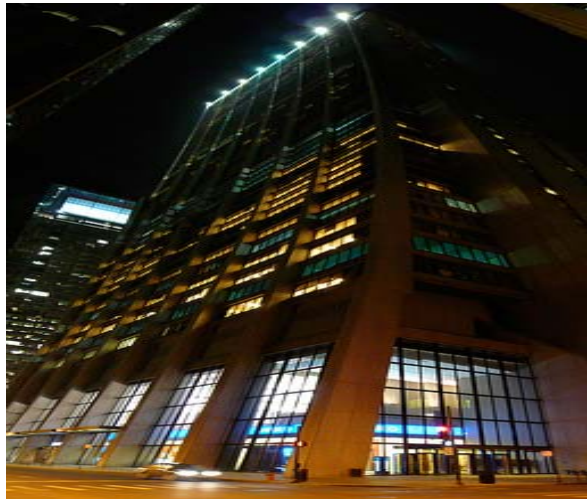
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In today's business world, what is becoming very popular and good for the environment, during our largely growing Eco-friendly ideologies, is continuously having commercial buildings being built for an LEED rating. This rating breaks the components of the building down into multiple categories such as Materials and Resources used, Water Efficiency, Quality of the Indoor/Outdoor of the building and the area within it, etc. The building I chose to research and gain a greater knowledge of the LEED ratings and what it means is the Exelon Headquarters in Chicago Illinois (Pic 0).



Pic. A; Exterior of Exelon Headquarters (L. Williams)

Back in April of 2003, the Exelon Building received the highest rating with a Platinum rating for the Commercial Interiors (CI) certification. Exelon is the largest commercial building in the world that currently holds a LEED Platinum rating in the mentioned area(s). Exelon received an LEED rating of 6/7 for its Sustainable Sites. From what I gather and my assumption is the rating being so high (6/7) is due to the fact that the building is located within an area with a development density of around 700,000+ square feet per acre. This almost forces the reduction of sprawl and bringing the community closer together.

The entire building' parking garages are all completely underground, which in result helps the overall heat and toxins that emit from vehicles within Chicago. This why I comfortable in assuming this benefit and heat fuel emissions reduction within the area was able to lead to Exelon to a 12/17 under the LEED Indoor and Outdoor Quality category. The building was built with top-of-the-line plumbing fixtures and hardware which helps reduce the use of water within the area by up to 31%. This would be a reason for the building's LEED Rating under the Water Efficiency Category was a perfect 2/2 for Exelon.



Pic. B; Inside the Office of Exelon (E. Ridge)



Pic. C; Refurbished and Recycled office furniture within Exelon (D. Dannis)

Within the building (**Pic. B & C**), you wouldn't know it off-hand, but over 1/3 of all furniture and fixtures used was salvaged and refurbished from the previous Exelon Headquarters. Almost 88% of all materials used to building the actual infrastructure of the building came from recycled material and regional areas. Because almost 68% of all materials used to fabricate the Exelon Building all came from no more than five hundred miles away and at least 14% of all materials used came from the local and regional areas near the building. This would be a strong reason as to why Exelon received a LEED score under the Materials and Resources of 8/14.

After furthering my research on the Exelon Headquarters Building, I found that the designers and engineers went with removable walls (**Pic. D**) in order to try and lower the financial and environmental costs. This would explain why Exelon received a perfect score from LEED with a 5/5 under the Innovation and Design category.



Pic. D (A. Swartz)

Last, but not least, Exelon was rated almost perfect with an 11/12 under the Energy and Atmosphere category. This was due to the decisions of the engineers and developers by selecting and using only adhesive paints, sealants, paints, carpet, tile, furniture and wood products that only let off low chemical emissions. The maintenance crew is only allowed to use cleaning products that have been certified “green-cleaning” chemicals. This improves the quality of the inside offices of the entire Exelon Building. Because the entire Exelon Headquarters really made sure it was being built in every aspect of Smart Growth/Sustainability, the final LEED rating of Energy and Atmosphere category was 11/12.

In looking at the overall ratings of the Exelon Building, there’s no doubt the developers and builders, as well as the city of Chicago should be very proud of itself for achieving the highest rating you can obtain through LEED. Despite all of the accolades, there is always plenty of room for improvement in anything we do in this world. The two individual categories the Exelon Building received the lowest rating(s) in were Materials and Resources (8/14) and Indoor and Outdoor Quality (12/17).

I would guess that these two ratings could eventually come up in Materials and Resources by continuing to use more and more recycled goods for the office and continue to find better ways to increase the availability of the recycled or refurbished goods they are currently using. The other lowest rated category was Indoor/Outdoor Environmental Quality.

This is sort of in a non-win situation. The building has all of its parking underground, but those emissions still are able to get out in the air. I think a company that big and that many employees could greatly reduce the quality of the air by getting with the city and installing public light rail that for employees and business people with that area of the city. Despite having vehicles park underneath the building, there's still harmful emissions come from the vehicles, regardless where they are forced to park.

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