

Ashkin Detects Tipping Point with LEED for Existing Buildings: OM

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Bloomington, IN – November 29, 2009 – After attending and presenting at the recent U.S. Green Building Council's Greenbuild Conference held in Phoenix, Arizona, November 11–13, 2009, green cleaning and sustainability advocate Stephen Ashkin notes a change in direction that could have major implications for the professional cleaning industry.

“I believe we are now at a tipping point regarding LEED for Existing Buildings,” he says. “At the conference, a strong message was delivered on the importance of addressing the millions of existing buildings adopting the LEED EM:OM protocol.”

LEED EM:OM is a rating system based on a set of performance standards for the sustainable and ongoing operations of buildings not undergoing major renovations. According to Ashkin, the protocol is designed to address many of the daily operations of buildings with considerable emphasis on cleaning and maintenance.

Among its requirements are these:

- Purchasing and using Green and sustainable cleaning products for hard floors, carpets, and other surfaces
- Developing strategies for the safe handling of all cleaning products
- Training cleaning professionals on the hazards, use, disposal, and recycling of cleaning chemicals
- Collecting building occupant feedback to evaluate and improve new cleaning technologies, procedures, and processes

“This is so important for the [cleaning] industry because Green Cleaning is no longer viewed as just a requirement for LEED certification; [instead] it plays a key, ongoing role in keeping facilities Green and sustainable,” says Ashkin. “It rewards healthier, more thorough cleaning and encourages building owners and managers to invest in more effective, high-performing cleaning strategies.”

Ashkin has been involved with the U.S. Green Building Council since 1993 and is a former member of its national board of directors.
