



White Paper 6: The Intersection of WELL and Smart Buildings

WELL Certification is a standard for sustainable buildings that focuses on the health and well-being of building occupants. It was developed by the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI) and is based on scientific research on how buildings can improve human health and well-being. Buildings that achieve WELL Certification are designed to provide a healthy, comfortable, and productive environment for their occupants. WELL certification often intersects with smart buildings because they both focus on positive building tenant outcomes. When thinking about smart buildings, we usually focus on the technology and applications enabled with the building—but WELL puts the focus on people and their well-being—so physical building design plays a large role.

Why it matters

The built environment has a significant impact on human health and well-being. Buildings can affect our physical health, mental health, and productivity. For example, poor indoor air quality can cause respiratory problems, and lack of natural light can lead to depression and other mental health issues. WELL Certification addresses these issues by providing a framework for building design and construction that prioritizes the health and well-being of occupants.

The Seven Concepts of WELL

- **Air:** Promotes clean air through ventilation, filtration, and other measures.
- **Water:** Ensures access to clean and safe drinking water.
- **Nourishment:** Encourages healthy eating habits and access to nutritious food.
- **Light:** Provides access to natural light and controls artificial lighting to promote circadian rhythm.

- **Fitness:** Encourages physical activity through design features and amenities.
- **Comfort:** Creates a comfortable indoor environment through temperature, noise, and ergonomics.
- **Mind:** Supports mental health and well-being through design features and programs.

The Benefits of WELL Certification

- **Health and well-being:** Buildings with WELL Certification prioritize the health and well-being of occupants, leading to better physical and mental health outcomes.
- **Increased productivity:** A healthy and comfortable work environment can lead to increased productivity and job satisfaction.
- **Reduced absenteeism:** Healthier employees are less likely to miss work due to illness.
- **Higher property values:** WELL Certification can increase the value of a property by demonstrating a commitment to sustainability and occupant health.

The Process of Certification

The process of getting WELL Certification involves four steps:

1. **Registration:** Building owners or developers register their project with the International WELL Building Institute.
2. **Documentation:** Project teams provide documentation to demonstrate compliance with WELL standards.
3. **Performance verification:** On-site visits and performance verification ensure that the building meets the necessary standards. Smart building technologies are used for performance verification and ongoing monitoring and management.
4. **Certification:** Once verification is complete, the building can be certified as meeting WELL standards.

Real-Life Examples of WELL Certified Buildings

There are many examples of WELL Certified buildings around the world, each with their own unique features and benefits. Here are just a few:

- **The Edge in Amsterdam:** The Edge is one of the most sustainable and innovative buildings in the world. It boasts features such as a smart lighting system that adjusts to individual preferences and occupancy

sensors that adjust temperature and air quality based on the number of occupants in a room.

- **CBRE Group Headquarters in Los Angeles:** The CBRE Group Headquarters is the first building in the world to achieve WELL Certification at the Platinum level. It features a circadian (rhythm) lighting system that mimics natural daylight and promotes healthy sleep patterns.
- **Bank of America Tower in New York City:** The Bank of America Tower is the first commercial high-rise building in the United States to achieve Platinum-level WELL Certification. It features a green roof and is designed to reduce energy consumption and waste.

Summary

Building design has a significant impact on our health and well-being. WELL Certification is an innovative and effective way to prioritize occupant health and well-being in building design. By promoting features such as access to natural light, clean air, and physical activity, WELL Certified buildings can improve physical and mental health, reduce stress, and enhance quality of life. As more buildings achieve certification, we may see a shift towards prioritizing health and well-being in the building industry. While not all smart buildings are WELL certified, most WELL buildings are smart buildings due to the ongoing performance verification demands to maintain compliance.

Next Steps

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