

# Healthy Building Certification Comparison



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# Overview: Healthy Building Certifications

## WELL

Created in 2014 by the Delos and the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI), the WELL Building Standard is one of the most popular certification programs with over 4,136 projects encompassing nearly 550 million square feet globally. WELL draws on scientific and medical research on environmental health and effects to advance how people live, work, and operate in the built environment. Like other certification programs such as LEED and PEER, WELL is administered by Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI).

## Fitwel

Created in 2017 in a joint effort by the Center for Active Design, the Center for Disease Control, and the U.S. General Services Administration, the Fitwel Rating System has quickly become a popular choice for building owners and managers looking to promote the health and wellness of their occupants. Fitwel is generally considered one of the least expensive and least complicated certification processes, assessing buildings on how well they follow a recommended list of 63 evidence-based design and policy strategies targeting building health and productivity.

## RESET

The RESET™ Air standard is a sensor-based and performance-driven indoor air quality standard developed for folks who want to improve occupant comfort and who take air quality seriously. Unlike WELL and other building certifications that may target indoor air quality, RESET is much more stringent in prioritizing occupant health, even requiring buildings to be re-certified annually.



# WELL



The WELL - Healthy Building Certification uses 10 core concepts and each of these core concepts is further broken down into 23 preconditions and 94 optimizations available to acquire the desired number of certification points. The "Thermal Comfort" concept, for instance, is centered around improving thermal comfort for occupants and requires one precondition (Thermal Performance) with six optimizations available to satisfy the requirement. Generally, building upgrades for this concept might include enhanced HVAC systems or advanced controls optimization.

As people start returning to their places of work or study, they will naturally have concerns about the cleanliness and healthiness of the buildings they occupy. WELL standards have the potential not only to mitigate these concerns through a demonstrated commitment to healthy building environments but also to deliver meaningful organizational benefits and an improved bottom line through increased workplace productivity and reduced absenteeism.

WELL tends to be a more rigorous process than the Fitwel certification and requires onsite performance testing by an approved WELL Assessor to ensure healthy building outcomes are being achieved. Projects are certified for three years, after which it must be re-certified. This offers an opportunity for ongoing improvements and higher certification levels.



# FitWel



Fitwel centers on the belief that buildings can be incrementally improved to create healthier building environments by following strategies linked to one of seven Fitwel Health Impact Categories. Within these seven Health Impact Categories, the Fitwel scorecard is further broken down into 12 categories of recommended evidence-based health and wellness strategies, including Indoor Environment, focused on improving air quality through, limiting harmful air pollutants and reducing exposure to them.

Once a building has registered with Fitwel, it will receive an automatic benchmark to track over time. Similar to WELL, Fitwel has a points structure wherein earning more points through approved upgrades and improvements results in higher certification levels (1, 2, or 3-star ratings for Fitwel as opposed to Silver, Gold, and Platinum ratings for WELL). Points are awarded based on the health and wellness impact resulting from an improvement as well as and how much evidence there is to tie the strategy to improved well-being. A 3-star rating for Fitwel, the highest available, denotes a building is supporting the well-being of its occupants with an exemplary number of evidence-based health and wellness strategies.

In addition to its simplicity, Fitwel is also much cheaper than certifications like WELL, requiring a registration fee of only \$500 compared with a starting WELL registration fee of between \$1500-4200 USD, at the time of this writing.



# RESET



There are two types of projects to which RESET certification can be applied: Commercial Interiors and Core & Shell.

RESET Air – Commercial Interiors (CI) tracks and communicates the health performance of building interiors in new or existing project types (i.e., what is the quality of the air people are breathing).

RESET Air – Core & Shell (CS) tracks and communicates the health performance of the entire building in new or existing project types (i.e., the quality of the air generated from the project's HVAC system).

RESET requires continuous air quality monitoring to ensure a project is meeting RESET's specified IAQ performance targets. At a minimum, this means using a grade A or B monitor that can effectively track, measure, and report on temperature and humidity, PM2.5, TVOC, CO2, and CO (in spaces where combustion is present). This data is then sent to the RESET Assessment Cloud, where it is compared against acceptable limits.

Unlike the IAQ testing requirements for WELL, daily averages from real-time monitors must stay within the acceptable IAQ performance targets for three consecutive months in order to be certified. Through continuous monitoring, building owners and managers can achieve greater insight into their systems and adjust behavior immediately.



# Cost Comparison

## WELL

**Cost:** For projects looking to address the full scope of project design, construction, and operations:

- Enrollment fee: \$2,500
- Program fee: \$0.16/sq ft\* Starting at \$6,500
- Onsite performance testing starting at \$6,500

## Fitwel

**Cost:** One-time registration fee of \$500 per project

Certification fees are dependent on project size \$6500 - \$11000

## RESET

**Cost:** Certification fees are dependent on project size \$1,917 - \$16,446 USD

Fees are based on the project size. In addition to the above, project teams are advised to consider auxiliary fees including, but not limited to:

- RESET AP consulting
- IAQ monitors for continuous monitoring
- RESET Accredited Data Providers for retrieving and storing monitor data and annual performance check for monitors.



# Next Steps

Certifications and standards are complex. Our team of knowledgeable healthy building specialists and consultants understands the complexities of certifications and standards. We work with our clients to unravel those complexities to reveal the best fit for their buildings and to develop simple pathways to achieving healthy building spaces for their occupants.

We are looking forward to learning how we can help you on your path to certifying your Healthy Building.

Contact us at [info@matthewsdesigngroup.ca](mailto:info@matthewsdesigngroup.ca)