

 By Rachel Phua

12 Sep 2017 09:20AM
(Updated: 12 Sep 2017 10:39PM)

179 shares



Singapore

New initiatives under Green Building Masterplan to emphasise healthier work environments



Some employees in Singapore can now look forward to working in a healthier environment as the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) updates its 3rd Green Building Masterplan.

SINGAPORE: Some employees in Singapore can now look forward to working in a healthier environment as the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) updates its 3rd Green Building Masterplan.

Several new initiatives were announced on Tuesday (Sep 12) at the opening of this year's Singapore Green Building Week, including changes to the Green Mark scheme.

ADDITIONS TO GREEN MARK SCHEME SERIES

BCA will conduct a one-year pilot on a new set of criteria for the Green Mark for Existing Non-Residential Buildings certification, which was last revised in 2012. The new measurements will include greater requirements for building owners to improve their indoor air quality, as well as adopt "smart" control systems to operate their buildings.

For example, building owners will be encouraged to use high-efficiency filters in air distribution systems and sensors to monitor indoor air pollutants.

Higher-tier green mark projects will also have to conduct a post-occupancy evaluation survey to see how they can improve occupants' comfort.

Changes to the scheme for existing non-residential buildings comes after the two major green mark schemes for new buildings were amended in 2015 and 2016.

The BCA also wanted to update the scheme for existing non-residential buildings after it conducted a study with the National University of Singapore on indoor air quality.

The research project found that buildings certified with a green mark had lower bacteria and pollutants in the air as compared to those not certified. And through a survey, they found that occupants in the Green Mark buildings were more satisfied with the indoor environment compared to their counterparts and less likely to experience "sick building syndrome" – when people feel unwell after staying inside a building for a period of time.

A new Green Mark scheme that is focused on improving the health of occupants through the office interior and wellness programmes offered will also launch in mid-2018.

The BCA is working with the Health Promotion Board to develop this separate scheme, which looks to encourage building owners and companies to offer "good designs such as the provision of energy efficient lighting and office equipment, as well as the development of workplace health-related programmes", the BCA said.

MAKING SURE BUILDINGS ARE ENERGY-EFFICIENT

But the BCA is not forgoing the need to help buildings in Singapore consume less energy.

To encourage more building owners to go eco-friendly, data on how much energy each commercial building consumes is now publicly available on BCA's online platforms. For now, the data was given voluntarily, but BCA said what will be made available already covers 76 per cent of all commercial buildings in Singapore.

Advertisement



we offer a range of income solutions to match your tastes.

LET'S SOLVE IT.

J.P.Morgan
Asset Management

Terms & conditions apply.

The BCA is looking to make it mandatory for all commercial buildings to disclose their energy performance in “a couple of years”.

It hopes that this data platform will encourage building owners to reduce their building's energy use through “peer pressure”. And by comparing how much energy other similar buildings use, it could spur them to think of more energy-saving – and hence, cost-saving – methods.

The BCA also revealed that it is developing a roadmap on how Singapore can create more energy-efficient buildings, or more specifically: low-rise buildings that produce more energy than it consumes; medium-rise buildings that generate as much energy as it uses; high-rise buildings that require much less energy than it usually does.



The roadmap will reveal what are some of the technologies building owners and tenants can tap on to green their buildings and how Singapore can enhance these equipment.

For example, the BCA is working with its partners on how to develop the country's solar panel capabilities so that their efficiency levels improve and how more of these renewable energy sources can be installed around the island.

The BCA said it has not fixed a date to launch the roadmap yet. It also has yet to set a target on the number of such energy-efficient buildings it wants Singapore to host, but the agency said it hopes to have a “good mix of demonstration projects” by 2035.

MORE GREEN EXPERTISE NEEDED

A new target on the number of green building professionals BCA hopes to train has also been set – 25,000 green building professional by 2025. The earlier target was 20,000 by 2020.

So far, about 16,000 professionals, managers, executives and technicians have been trained by higher learning institutes, the BCA Academy and industry associations, the BCA said.

To produce more green-minded individuals, some of the professions BCA is looking at are: architects that can design energy-efficient buildings; M&E engineers that know how to design devices that save energy; facilities managers that can operate a green building; researchers and developers with know-how on “smart” technologies.

With more green building professionals, Singapore will also be able to move up the global construction sector's value-chain, as the country has the talent to produce eco-friendly building products – particularly those for places with tropical climates – that are also in demand internationally, BCA said.

More details about the manpower plan will be given during the Construction Industry Transformation Map, which will be released in October, BCA added.

Source: CNA/aa