



WELL BUILDINGS

The International WELL Building Standard

IS YOUR BUILDING HEALTHY?

Buildings should not only be aesthetically pleasing and functional but also prioritize the health and well-being of their occupants.

Integrating the principles of the International WELL Building Standard creates spaces that promote optimal health, productivity and satisfaction. By focusing on elements such as indoor air quality, natural light, ergonomic design and chemical free materials, WELL strives to craft environments that support the physical, mental and emotional well-being of those who inhabit them. This approach goes beyond conventional architectural practices and recognizes the profound impact that the built environment has on human health and happiness. With a passion for innovation and a dedication to excellence, WELL invites you to join in a journey toward healthier and inspiring spaces.

BENEFITS OF A 'WELL' BUILDING

The International WELL Building Institute (IWBI) is an organization that focuses on promoting health and wellness in the built environment. The WELL Building Standard is a framework for designing buildings to support human health and well-being. Here are some of the benefits associated with implementing the International WELL Building Standard:

IMPROVED OCCUPANT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The primary goal of the WELL Building Standard is to enhance the health and well-being of building occupants. By incorporating features such as better air quality, access to natural light, ergonomic design and opportunities for physical activity, WELL-certified buildings aim to create healthier indoor environments.

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND SATISFACTION

Studies have shown that employees in WELL-certified buildings report higher levels of productivity, satisfaction and overall well-being. Better indoor air quality, access to natural light and comfortable indoor environments can contribute to increased concentration, creativity and job satisfaction among occupants.

ATTRACTIVENESS TO TENANTS AND INVESTORS

As awareness of the importance of health and wellness in the built environment grows, there is increasing demand for buildings that prioritize occupant well-being. WELL-certified buildings are seen as more attractive to tenants who value the health and productivity of their employees, as well as investors who recognize the potential long-term benefits of sustainable and healthy building practices.

DIFFERENTIATION IN THE MARKET

Achieving WELL certification can help buildings stand out in a competitive real estate market. It demonstrates a commitment to providing high-quality indoor environments and sets a standard for health and wellness that can differentiate a building from others that may lack similar features.

HEALTHCARE COST SAVINGS

By creating healthier indoor environments, WELL-certified buildings may help reduce healthcare costs associated with occupant illnesses and absenteeism. Studies have shown that improvements in indoor air quality and other environmental factors can lead to lower rates of respiratory problems, allergies and other health issues.

TEN CORE CONCEPTS

The International WELL Building Standard is structured around ten core concepts, or categories, which address various aspects of building design, operation and management to promote health and well-being. Here is an overview of each of these concepts:



Air: The Air concept focuses on ensuring high indoor air quality by controlling pollutants, such as particulate matter, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and carbon dioxide. Strategies include proper ventilation, air filtration and minimizing potential sources of indoor air pollution.



Water: This concept aims to provide access to clean and safe drinking water while promoting and minimizing water contaminants. Strategies may include filtration systems, water testing and access to water for drinking and hygiene.



Nourishment: Nourishment focuses on promoting healthy eating habits by providing access to nutritious food options, encouraging mindful eating practices and supporting food transparency and sustainability. This concept may involve incorporating features such as onsite gardens, healthy food choices and nutrition education programs.



Light: The Light concept emphasizes the importance of natural and artificial lighting in supporting circadian rhythms and enhancing visual comfort with proper lighting levels. Strategies include maximizing access to natural daylight, controlling glare and implementing quality lighting systems.



Movement: Movement encourages physical activity and movement throughout the day by providing opportunities for exercise, active transportation and incorporating active design features into the built environment. This may include amenities such as ergonomic workstations, fitness centers, walking paths and bike storage facilities.



Thermal Comfort: Thermal Comfort focuses on creating indoor environments that promote comfort to all occupants. Strategies may include optimizing temperature and humidity levels, providing operable windows and exterior shading.





Sound: Sound focuses on creating indoor environments that promote acoustic comfort. Strategies may include reducing noise pollution, providing sound isolation walls and controlling reverberation with sound reducing surfaces.



Materials: Materials focus on minimizing exposure to hazardous substances and promoting the use of chemical free materials in building construction and furnishing. Strategies include specifying low emission materials and implementing material transparency and optimization practices.



Mind: The Mind concept addresses mental health and well-being by promoting stress reduction, relaxation and cognitive function. Strategies may include incorporating a strong connection to nature and providing spaces for meditation and mindfulness practices.



Community: Community emphasizes creating inclusive, accessible and socially connected environments that support community engagement and well-being. Strategies may include providing spaces for social interaction, supporting local community initiatives and promoting diversity and inclusion.

These ten concepts provide a foundation for addressing various aspects of health and well-being in the built environment. They guide architects, designers, and building professionals in creating spaces that prioritize occupant health and happiness. Overall, the International WELL Building Standard offers a comprehensive framework for designing and operating buildings that prioritizes the health and well-being of occupants, leading to numerous benefits for building owners, tenants and society.



Tim Veatch,

AIA,

is an Architect at frk architects + engineers, Iowa's leading architecture firm focused on education.

