



the sustainability certification program for furniture



level is the multi-attribute, sustainability standard and third-party certification program for the furniture industry. It has been created to deliver an open and holistic means of evaluating and communicating the environmental and social impacts of furniture products in the built environment. Taking into account a company's social actions, energy usage, material selection, human and ecosystem health, and numerous other impacts, **level** addresses how a product is sustainable from multiple perspectives.

level offers IDCEC and GBCI accredited CEU training modules for members of the A&D community who wish to learn how to specify sustainable products. For information about hosting an authorized level training session at your company, facility, or for your group, visit www.levelcertified.org/training/



Certification & Eligibility

In order to achieve a **level** certification, a manufacturer must contract with an authorized, independent, third-party certification body. That certification body then uses the ANSI/BIFMA e3 Furniture Sustainability Standard to conduct the audit function, measure all required information, verify compliance and certify the specific product with the **level** conformance mark. Manufacturers that evaluate their products against the sustainability standard without the third party auditing process will not be able to use the level conformance mark and are not considered “**level certified**”. Consult the **level** website (www.levelcertified.org) for a current list of authorized third-party certification bodies.

Three Categories and Four Impact Areas

In the **level** certification process, not only the Product, but the Facility or Facilities that produced it, and the Organization itself are all scored according to sustainability criteria in the four impact areas of Materials, Energy & Atmosphere, Human & Ecosystem Health, and Social Responsibility. In order to be **level** certified, products must meet certain minimum requirements (prerequisites) in each impact area, before going on to earn additional credits necessary to achieve certification at a given conformance tier. It requires serious effort by manufacturers to measure their manufacturing process inputs and outputs, incorporate new material formulations, create design protocols, and formalize corporate actions around social responsibility.

The **level** conformance mark is an easily identifiable but hard-earned symbol of a company’s commitment to sustainability.



Three Categories



Product

The product is examined for its component materials, its longevity, its recyclability, and a myriad of other factors that affect its impact on the natural environment.



Facility

The operational impacts associated with the facility that makes the product are measured against relevant criteria across the four impact areas.



Organization

The corporate values and procedures of the organization behind a product are evaluated to determine leadership in sustainable practices.



Four Impact Areas



Materials

Section addresses material and natural resource considerations such as the product design process, efficient use of materials; recycled content, rapidly renewable, bio-based and climate neutral materials, water and waste management, packaging, and product life cycle impacts.



Energy & Atmosphere

Section addresses energy and atmospheric considerations such as establishing an energy policy, energy and greenhouse gas audits, reducing energy impacts, renewable energy use and generation, product embodied energy, and greenhouse gas reporting.



Human & Ecosystem Health

Section addresses the human and natural ecosystem health impacts of the chemical constituents used in furniture products, the production processes, and the operations and maintenance of facilities.



Social Responsibility

Section addresses management practices designed to avoid, detect or respond to threats to employee and community health and safety. Credits focus on inclusiveness, good corporate citizenship, community engagement, and instilling these practices into the supply chain.



Materials

- Design for the environment program (prerequisite)
- Recyclable and biodegradable materials
- Efficient use of materials
- Recycled content
- Rapidly renewable materials
- Bio-based renewable materials
- Climate neutral materials
- Solid waste management
- Water management
- Extended product responsibility



Energy & Atmosphere

- Energy policy (prerequisite)
- Building energy inventory
- Improve building energy performance
- High performance green building
- Finished product energy consumption
- Transportation impacts (inbound/outbound)
- Renewable energy use
- Renewable energy generation
- Greenhouse gas inventory
- Greenhouse gas reduction
- Greenhouse gas reporting
- Embodied energy inventory
- Embodied energy reduction



Human & Ecosystem Health

- Regulatory compliance (prerequisite)
- Implement an environmental management system
- Low-emitting product
- Implement a chemical management plan
- Reduce hazardous waste and emissions
- Inventory and eliminate chemicals of concern in the product
- Inventory/reduce/eliminate chemicals of concern in the process
- Inventory chemicals of concern in the maintenance of facilities
- Inventory chemicals of concern in the operations of facilities
- Reduce/eliminate chemicals of concern in the maintenance of facilities
- Reduce/eliminate chemicals of concern in the operations of facilities



Social Responsibility

- Employee health and safety management (prerequisite)
- Labor and human rights (prerequisite)
- Social responsibility policy
- External health and safety management standard
- Inclusiveness programs
- Community outreach
- Social responsibility reporting
- Encourage social responsibility in the supply chain



	organization	facility	product	totals
materials	2	1	8	11 / 26
energy & atmosphere	1	8	1	10 / 25
human & ecosystem health	-	4	4	8 / 29
social responsibility	4	1	-	5 / 10
totals	7 / 17	14 / 38	13 / 35	34 / 90

Sustainability Score

level has three conformance thresholds within the standard. Products can be awarded a **level 1**, **level 2**, or **level 3** conformance mark based on the combined score achieved in their sustainability evaluation. These thresholds are analogous to the Silver, Gold, and Platinum rankings within the LEED rating systems, but they provide the flexibility to add new thresholds to the program in the future as the industry evolves to become even more environmentally and socially responsible. Scoring is based on the degree to which the product, the manufacturer, and its producing facilities meet sustainability requirements in the four areas of Materials, Energy & Atmosphere, Human & Ecosystem Health, and Social Responsibility.



Business & Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association (BIFMA)

678 Front Avenue NW – Suite 150

Grand Rapids, MI 49504

phone: (616) 285-3963

www.bifma.org

www.levelcertified.org