

2015 vs. 2020 NGBS – An Overview

*This document is a high-level overview comparison of the 2015 and 2020 versions of the National Green Building Standard (NGBS); it is not intended to provide a detailed, comprehensive analysis. **To determine project compliance, please review the full NGBS version(s).***

The 2020 NGBS is the fourth version of the standard. The 2008 and 2012 NGBS versions have been sunsetted. Certification is currently available to the 2015 and 2020 NGBS. 2020 NGBS revisions were extensive. This document and "[Which Version is For You? Selecting Your Best NGBS Option](#)" were designed as tools to help you make the best choice for your particular project and market.

Expanded Scope

Three big scope revisions in the 2020:

1. New definition of residential that allows more buildings to earn NGBS Green certification (e.g., assisted living, dorms, extended stay hotels/motels).
2. Commercial area certification for mixed-use multifamily buildings if non-residential space is <49% of gross floor area – Core-and-Shell or Fully Fitted Out & Equipped.
3. Single-Family Certified streamlined certification option for single-family homes, townhomes, duplexes.

Building Compliance Requirements

- Baseline of 2020 NGBS = 2018 IECC, 2018 IRC, and 2018 IBC
- **NO** revisions from 2015 NGBS to the threshold points required for certification:

**2020 NGBS Table 303
Threshold Point Ratings for Green Buildings**

Green Building Categories		2012 NGBS Rating Level Points			
		BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD	EMERALD
Chapter 5	Lot Design, Preparation, and Development	50	64	93	121
Chapter 6	Resource Efficiency	43	59	89	119
Chapter 7	Energy Efficiency	30	45	60	70
Chapter 8	Water Efficiency	25	39	67	92
Chapter 9	Indoor Environmental Quality	25	42	69	97
Chapter 10	Operation, Maintenance, and Building Owner Education	8	10	11	12
	Additional Points from any category	50	75	100	100
Total Points:		231	334	489	611

Chapter 5: Lot Design, Preparation, and Development

- **NO** new mandatory practices
- **NO** threshold point changes
- **NEW** practices to earn points toward certification:
 - Walkability, bike storage, and shared use vehicles/bikes
 - Compliance with **International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC)**
 - CNG vehicle refueling and on-site recreation space
 - Street networks with high intersection density
 - Smoking prohibitions
 - On-site dedicated recreational space

Chapter 6: Resource Efficiency

- **NEW** mandatory practice: Construction and waste management plan must include information on the proper handling and disposal of hazardous waste
- **NO** threshold point changes
- **NEW** practices to earn points toward certification:
 - Recycling and waste management practices
 - Kitchen and vanity cabinets certified to KCMA performance standard
 - Additional points for universal design elements
- **Eliminated** practice for mass walls
- **NEW** section on product declarations
- **NEW** section on resilient construction

Chapter 7: Energy Efficiency

- **NO** new mandatory practices for most compliance pathways
- Energy efficiency baseline (and Bronze certification) is 2018 IECC compliance, plus two practices
- **Revised** Alternative Compliance Path for Bronze and Silver; adds Gold for Tropical Zone
- Additional flexibility in Performance Path compliance: allows on-site renewable energy generation for performance analysis
- Three new mandatory practices for Prescriptive Path
- **Revised** Chapter 7 tables for point values – *check for new requirements*
- **NEW** practices to earn points toward certification:
 - CNG Vehicle Fueling Station
 - Grid-Interactive Battery Storage System
 - Smart Ventilation
 - Alternative Refrigerant
 - Third-party Utility Benchmarking
 - Entryway Air Seal

Chapter 8: Water Efficiency

- **NEW** mandatory practice: Pools must have dedicated meter to measure water supplied to pool or spa
- **NO** threshold point changes
- **NEW** practices to earn points toward certification:
 - Water useage metering
 - Kitchen faucets
- **Revised** points available and/or flow rates of fixtures eligible to earn points
- **NEW** Performance Path for water efficiency compliance: Water Rating Index (WRI)

Chapter 9: Indoor Environmental Quality

- **NEW** mandatory practices:
 - Microbial growth and moisture inspection
 - Radon testing (mandatory for Zone 1)
- **NO** threshold point changes
- **NEW** practices to earn points toward certification:
 - Ventilation for MF common spaces
 - Furnishings and furniture
 - Radon mitigation options
 - Enhanced air infiltration
 - Sound barrier
 - Evaporative mold prevention

Chapter 10: Operation, Maintenance, and Owner Operation

- **NEW** mandatory practice: Occupant manual must be compiled and distributed
- **NO** threshold point changes
- **NEW** practices to earn points toward certification:
 - MF Occupant training
 - Green appraisal addendum is completed
 - Green appraisal is uploaded to MLS

Existing Building Renovation (Chapter 11)

- **NO** threshold point changes
- **Revisions** throughout to add flexibility
- **Added** Prescriptive Path for energy and water efficiency while maintaining Performance Path option
- Allows 3-year look-back for remodel activities provided there is documentation for baseline conditions

NEW Chapter 12: Certified Compliance for Single Family Homes, Townhomes, and Duplexes

- All practices mandatory; compliance earns “Certified” level
- Focus on most impactful green measures:
 - Water efficiency
 - Moisture and mold management
 - Indoor environmental quality
 - Energy efficiency 7.5% above 2018 IECC
- Every home third-party verified, which increases compliance and quality

NEW Chapter 13: Commercial Spaces

- All practices mandatory; compliance earns “Certified” level
- Non-residential space certification is voluntary, but must include residential portion to earn Certified
- Core-and-Shell: verification of exterior air barrier, insulation, air sealing, and fenestration requirements
- Fully-Fitted Out & Equipped: verification of all tenant equipment, fixtures, systems, and finishes

NGBS Green Program Notes

- Only NGBS Green Verifiers accredited to the 2020 NGBS can inspect projects seeking 2020 NGBS Green certification
- **NEW** separate NGBS Green Scoring Tools for single family and multifamily new construction; for single family and multifamily renovation
- **NO** sunset date yet for 2015 NGBS
- **NEW** NGBS Green+ badges for Wellness, Net Zero Energy, Zero Water, Resilience, Smart Home, & Universal Design

More Resources to Get Your Home NGBS Green Certified

- [Quick Start Guide](#)
- [Builder's Resource Guide](#)
- [Score Your NGBS Project](#) (or get help with scoring from [this video](#))
- [NGBS Green Bronze Cookbooks](#)
- [2015 & 2020 NGBS Energy Performance Comparison – Single-Family & Low-Rise Multifamily](#)
- [2015 & 2020 NGBS Energy Performance Comparison – Mid- and High-Rise Multifamily](#)
- [NGBS Green+ Badges](#)
- [New to Green? Use the NGBS Bronze Cookbook](#)
- [Find a Verifier](#)
- [Find Available Incentives](#)