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USGBC LEED-AP-Homes Exam Syllabus Topics:

Topic	Details
Topic 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Innovation: This section of the exam measures the skills of a Design Innovation Lead. It invites professionals to explore creative and exemplary strategies that surpass standard credits—such as pilot projects or pioneering sustainability solutions—demonstrating forward-thinking in residential design.
Topic 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Priority Credits: This section of the exam measures the skills of a Regional Performance Advisor. It covers specific environmental credits that reflect local priorities, enabling tailored certification strategies that align with regional ecosystems or regulatory contexts.

Topic 3

- Energy and Atmosphere: This section of the exam measures the skills of a Green Building Engineer. It includes evaluating the principles of energy efficiency, performance optimization, and emissions reduction in residential design, all critical to minimizing environmental impact while meeting occupant needs.

USGBC LEED AP Homes (Residential) Exam Sample Questions (Q36-Q41):

NEW QUESTION # 36

Which of the following strategies contributes to achieving Sustainable Sites Credit, Rainwater Management?

- A. Use drought-resistant vegetation in all planting areas
- **B. Direct rainwater runoff toward an appropriate permanent infiltration feature**
- C. Install a graywater collection system with filtration for irrigation and non-potable use
- D. Provide filtration of the stormwater runoff before discharging into the city storm system

Answer: B

Explanation:

The LEED for Homes Rating System (v4) includes the Sustainable Sites (SS) Credit: Rainwater Management, which aims to reduce stormwater runoff and its environmental impacts through on-site management strategies.

According to the LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction (v4):

SS Credit: Rainwater Management (1-3 points)

Manage stormwater runoff through strategies such as directing runoff to permanent infiltration features (e.g., rain gardens, permeable paving, or bioswales) to reduce the volume and rate of runoff entering storm sewers.

Source: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, Sustainable Sites Credit: Rainwater Management, p. 76.

The LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C rating system confirms:

SS Credit: Rainwater Management

Directing rainwater runoff to permanent infiltration features, such as rain gardens or infiltration trenches, contributes to credit achievement by promoting on-site retention and reducing stormwater discharge.

Source: LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C, Credit Library, accessed via USGBC LEED Online.

The correct answer is direct rainwater runoff toward an appropriate permanent infiltration feature (Option B), as this directly reduces runoff volume, aligning with the credit's intent.

Why not the other options?

Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, WE Credit: Outdoor Water Use, p. 98.

C). Install a graywater collection system with filtration for irrigation and non-potable use: Graywater systems are addressed in WE Credit: Indoor Water Use or WE Credit: Outdoor Water Use, not stormwater management. Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, WE Credit: Indoor Water Use, p. 96.

D). Provide filtration of the stormwater runoff before discharging into the city storm system: Filtration improves water quality but does not reduce runoff volume, which is the primary goal of the Rainwater Management credit. Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, SS Credit:

Rainwater Management, p. 76.

The LEED AP Homes Candidate Handbook emphasizes SS credits, including rainwater management, and references the LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction as a key resource. The exam is based on LEED v4, ensuring the relevance of infiltration strategies.

References:

LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, USGBC, Sustainable Sites Credit: Rainwater Management, p. 76.

LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C, USGBC LEED Credit Library, accessed via LEED Online (<https://www.usgbc.org/credits>).

LEED AP Homes Candidate Handbook, GBCI, October 2024, p. 12 (references study resources and exam scope based on LEED v4).

USGBC LEED for Homes Rating System (v4), available via USGBC website (<https://www.usgbc.org/resources/leed-homes-design-and-construction-v4>).

LEED v4.1 for Homes, USGBC, accessed via LEED Online, confirming rainwater management strategies.

NEW QUESTION # 37

Solar hot water heating systems are rewarded under which Energy and Atmosphere credit?

- A. Balancing of Heating and Cooling Distribution Systems

- B. High-Efficiency Appliances
- C. Efficient Domestic Hot Water Equipment
- D. Renewable Energy

Answer: C

Explanation:

The LEED for Homes Rating System (v4) rewards energy-efficient systems, including solar hot water heating, under the Energy and Atmosphere (EA) category. Solar hot water systems reduce energy use for water heating, a significant component of residential energy consumption.

According to the LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction (v4):

EA Credit: Efficient Domestic Hot Water Equipment (1-3 points)

Install high-efficiency water heating equipment, such as solar hot water systems, that meet specified performance criteria (e.g., solar fraction of at least 0.4 for solar systems). Points are awarded based on the efficiency and percentage of hot water demand met by the system.

Source: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, Energy and Atmosphere Credit:

Efficient Domestic Hot Water Equipment, p. 134.

The LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C rating system confirms:

EA Credit: Efficient Domestic Hot Water Equipment

Solar hot water systems qualify for points by reducing energy use for water heating, based on their solar fraction or efficiency.

Source: LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C, Credit Library, accessed via USGBC LEED Online.

Solar hot water heating systems are rewarded under Efficient Domestic Hot Water Equipment (Option B), as they directly address water heating efficiency.

Why not the other options?

Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, EA Credit: High-Efficiency Appliances, p. 136.

C). Renewable Energy: This credit rewards on-site renewable energy generation (e.g., solar photovoltaic panels for electricity), not solar thermal systems for water heating. Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, EA Credit: Renewable Energy, p. 138.

D). Balancing of Heating and Cooling Distribution Systems: This credit addresses HVAC duct design and balancing, not water heating. Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, EA Credit: Balancing of Heating and Cooling Distribution Systems, p. 126.

The LEED AP Homes Candidate Handbook emphasizes EA credits, including water heating efficiency, and references the LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction as a key resource. The exam is based on LEED v4, ensuring the relevance of this credit.

References:

LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, USGBC, Energy and Atmosphere Credit: Efficient Domestic Hot Water Equipment, p. 134.

LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C, USGBC LEED Credit Library, accessed via LEED Online (<https://www.usgbc.org/credits>).

LEED AP Homes Candidate Handbook, GBCI, October 2024, p. 12 (references study resources and exam scope based on LEED v4).

USGBC LEED for Homes Rating System (v4), available via USGBC website (<https://www.usgbc.org/resources/leed-homes-design-and-construction-v4>).

LEED v4.1 for Homes, USGBC, accessed via LEED Online, confirming solar hot water criteria.

NEW QUESTION # 38

Envelope leakage is minimized by:

- A. Installing a drainage plane.
- B. Conducting a blower door test.
- C. Specifying HERS Grade II Insulation.
- D. Installing a continuous air barrier.

Answer: D

Explanation:

Minimizing envelope leakage is a critical component of improving energy efficiency in homes, as it reduces unintended air infiltration and exfiltration through the building envelope. This concept is addressed in the LEED for Homes Rating System (v4) under the Energy and Atmosphere (EA) category, specifically in credits related to Air Infiltration and Building Envelope Performance.

According to the LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction (v4), the primary method to minimize envelope

leakage is to install a continuous air barrier:

EA Prerequisite: Minimum Energy Performance

To reduce air infiltration, projects must include a continuous air barrier system that is sealed at all penetrations, joints, and interfaces to prevent air leakage. The air barrier must be installed around the entire building envelope, including walls, roofs, and floors.

Source: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, Energy and Atmosphere Prerequisite: Minimum Energy Performance, p. 112.

Additionally, the LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C Crating system reinforces this requirement:

EA Credit: Air Infiltration

Install a continuous air barrier system to control air leakage through the building envelope. The air barrier must be airtight, durable, and continuous, with all seams, penetrations, and transitions sealed.

Source: LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C, Credit Library, accessed via USGBC LEED Online.

A continuous air barrier is a system of materials (e.g., house wraps, sealed drywall, or spray foam) that forms a complete barrier to air movement, significantly reducing energy losses due to leakage. This is a proactive design and construction strategy to achieve energy efficiency goals.

Why not the other options?

Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, Sustainable Sites Credit:

Rainwater Management, p. 76, which discusses drainage planes in the context of moisture control.

B). Conducting a blower door test: A blower door test is a diagnostic tool used to measure air leakage in a building, not to minimize it. It quantifies the air tightness of the envelope (in air changes per hour, ACH) but does not physically reduce leakage. It is required for verification in LEED v4 (EA Credit: Air Infiltration) but is not a solution for minimizing leakage. Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, EA Credit: Air Infiltration, p. 124.

D). Specifying HERS Grade II Insulation: HERS (Home Energy Rating System) insulation grades refer to the quality of insulation installation, with Grade II indicating moderate defects. While proper insulation reduces conductive heat loss, it does not directly address air leakage, which is managed by the air barrier system. Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, EA Credit: Insulation, p.

120, which discusses HERS insulation grades but not air leakage.

The LEED AP Homes Candidate Handbook emphasizes the importance of understanding EA credits, including air infiltration, for the exam, referencing the LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction as a key study resource. The handbook confirms that the exam is based on LEED v4, ensuring the relevance of the continuous air barrier requirement.

References:

LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, USGBC, Energy and Atmosphere Prerequisite: Minimum Energy Performance, p. 112, and EA Credit: Air Infiltration, p. 124.

LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C, USGBC LEED Credit Library, accessed via LEED Online (<https://www.usgbc.org/credits>).

LEED AP Homes Candidate Handbook, GBCI, October 2024, p. 12 (references study resources and exam scope based on LEED v4).

USGBC LEED for Homes Rating System (v4), available via USGBC website (<https://www.usgbc.org/resources/leed-homes-design-and-construction-v4>).

LEED v4.1 for Homes, USGBC, accessed via LEED Online, confirming air barrier requirements.

NEW QUESTION # 39

What is the intent of Innovation Prerequisite: Preliminary Rating?

- A. To encourage exceptional performance for current credits and promote innovative performance in pioneering areas
- B. To define the credits that can be achieved most cost-effectively
- **C. To maximize opportunities for integrative, cost-effective adoption of green design and construction strategies**
- D. To define the mandatory certification level at the beginning and declare it to all parties

Answer: C

Explanation:

The LEED for Homes Rating System (v4) includes the Innovation (IN) Prerequisite: Preliminary Rating, which requires the project team to conduct an early assessment to identify achievable credits and set sustainability goals.

According to the LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction (v4):

IN Prerequisite: Preliminary Rating

The intent is to maximize opportunities for integrative, cost-effective adoption of green design and construction strategies by establishing a preliminary rating early in the design process. This involves identifying potential credits and setting performance goals with the project team.

Source: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, Innovation Prerequisite: Preliminary Rating, p. 186.

The LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C Crating system confirms:

IN Prerequisite: Preliminary Rating

The goal is to foster an integrative process that identifies cost-effective green strategies and aligns the project team on sustainability objectives from the outset.

Source: LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C, Credit Library, accessed via USGBC LEED Online.

The correct answer is to maximize opportunities for integrative, cost-effective adoption of green design and construction strategies (Option C), as this reflects the prerequisite's focus on early planning for sustainability.

Why not the other options?

Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, IN Prerequisite: Preliminary Rating, p. 186.

B). To define the mandatory certification level at the beginning and declare it to all parties: The prerequisite does not mandate a certification level; it sets goals for credits. Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, IN Prerequisite: Preliminary Rating, p. 186.

D). To encourage exceptional performance for current credits and promote innovative performance in pioneering areas: This is the intent of IN Credit: Innovation, not the prerequisite. Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, IN Credit: Innovation, p. 190.

The LEED AP Homes Candidate Handbook emphasizes IN prerequisites, including Preliminary Rating, and references the LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction as a key resource. The exam is based on LEED v4, ensuring the relevance of integrative planning.

References:

LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, USGBC, Innovation Prerequisite: Preliminary Rating, p. 186.

LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C, USGBC LEED Credit Library, accessed via LEED Online (<https://www.usgbc.org/credits>).

LEED AP Homes Candidate Handbook, GBCI, October 2024, p. 12 (references study resources and exam scope based on LEED v4).

USGBC LEED for Homes Rating System (v4), available via USGBC website (<https://www.usgbc.org/resources/leed-homes-design-and-construction-v4>).

LEED v4.1 for Homes, USGBC, accessed via LEED Online, confirming preliminary rating intent.

NEW QUESTION # 40

The prerequisite for homeowner basic operations and training must include:

- A. Educational information on "green power"
- B. A map of neighborhood open spaces
- C. A DVD with operations and maintenance information
- D. A two-hour house walk-through including equipment training

Answer: D

Explanation:

The LEED for Homes Rating System (v4) includes the Innovation (IN) Prerequisite: Education of the Homeowner, Tenant, or Building Manager, which ensures occupants are educated on the home's sustainable features and maintenance requirements.

According to the LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction (v4):

IN Prerequisite: Education of the Homeowner, Tenant, or Building Manager Provide a minimum of a two-hour walk-through of the home with the homeowner or tenant, including training on the operation and maintenance of equipment and systems, such as HVAC, water heating, and renewable energy systems.

Source: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, Innovation Prerequisite: Education of the Homeowner, Tenant, or Building Manager, p. 188.

The LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C Crating system confirms:

IN Prerequisite: Education of the Homeowner or Tenant

A two-hour walk-through with equipment training is required to educate homeowners on the operation and maintenance of green features.

Source: LEED v4.1 Residential BD+C, Credit Library, accessed via USGBC LEED Online.

The prerequisite requires a two-hour house walk-through including equipment training (Option C) to ensure homeowners understand how to operate and maintain the home's sustainable systems.

Why not the other options?

Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, IN Credit: Innovation, p. 190.

B). A map of neighborhood open spaces: This is relevant to LT Credit: Community Resources and Services, not homeowner education. Reference: LEED Reference Guide for Homes Design and Construction, v4, LT Credit: Community Resources and Services, p. 56.

