

MEDIA RELEASE

GREEN OFFICE TREND ON THE RISE

28 August 2013, (Wednesday) - Some 350,000m² of office space has been greened since the launch of the BCA Green Mark for Office Interiors scheme in 2009. From four green offices in 2009 to 63 in 2012, the BCA Green Mark for Office Interiors scheme has seen an exponential increase in take-up in the last few years. Out of these 63 offices, half achieved higher Green Mark ratings - Platinum and Gold^{Plus} and the rest achieved Gold and Certified level. The scheme was launched to help promote the use of environmentally friendly features and sustainable practices in offices.

2. Dr John Keung, CEO of Building and Construction Authority said, “Office buildings make up a significant percentage of the building stock in Singapore. Such buildings may be multi-tenanted, hence the way individual tenanted spaces are operated and maintained may not always be under the control of the building owner. Thus, BCA launched the Green Mark for Office Interior scheme to promote and recognise environmentally-friendly and sustainable practices of office tenants. Additionally, it also complements the BCA Green Mark for Buildings by encouraging individual office tenants within buildings to be sustainable”.

Benefits of a Green Office

3. The benefits of a green office include a substantial cost savings in utilities bills, and studies have also shown that green design efforts for the workplace help to create an environment that is both functional and comfortable, bolsters workers’ productivity and boosts the bottom line. For example, employees are likely to perform better when they are physically more comfortable and well in a better indoor built environment.

Initiatives to promote Green Mark for Office Interiors programme

4. To guide tenants of buildings on how to incorporate green features in their offices and the cost savings that comes with it, BCA recently launched the “**Tour of Green**

Mark Offices”, a pilot outreach programme targeted at senior and mid-management executives and CSR personnel who have a decision-making role in greening their offices.

5. The tour takes participants through the way the office is being planned according to the needs of the users. Ways include leveraging on natural sunlight, use of energy efficient office equipment and lighting. For a start, BCA has planned bi-monthly tours to six Green Mark Offices for the next one year. Jurong Consultants’ Office at the JTC Summit was the first stop for BCA’s Green Mark office tour when it commenced in July this year. Jurong Consultants’ Office, a Green Mark Platinum award winner under the “Office Interior” category in 2010, experienced a 25% improvement in energy performance since incorporating green features. Its office was designed with a barrier free open office design, natural lighting at their workstations and the usage of environmentally friendly materials in their renovation and office operations. Participants found the tour informative and engaging as they also learned how JTC obtained employees’ buy-in into the office greening process through this tour. The next office tour has been scheduled in October at another Green Mark Platinum project, Autodesk Asia.

6. “Ultimately, this programme aims to create a user-centric demand to encourage more office occupants, as users, to push for their offices to be certified Green Mark. We are hopeful that upon witnessing the success stories of the various exemplary Green Mark Office interior winners, some of these participants would eventually be inspired to do their part for the sustainability of the built environment.” Dr Keung continued.

7. Additionally, BCA has also planned for a series of talks to promote environmental sustainability for office tenants in collaboration with building owners and developers, Singapore Compact and interior fit-out specialists. Themed “Workplace Transformation – Towards Better Sustainable Living and Well – Being’, the talks educate what tenants can do to improve the environmental sustainability of their businesses and its impact on the environment as well as the comfort of employees, through the Green Mark Scheme for Office Interiors. The second talk co-organised by BCA and Keppel REIT today took place at Intercontinental Hotel.

8. Ms Ng Hsueh Ling, CEO of Keppel REIT Management, shared, “As environmental issues dominate global agendas, businesses today place a greater importance on going green and being sustainable. At Keppel, we are committed to maintain high standards of environmental protection. “We recognise that businesses and tenants play an important role in our sustainability journey. For instance, at Keppel REIT’s office buildings, we provide Green Fit-Out and Green Office Operation Guides to tenants to encourage and cultivate a commitment towards sustainability.”

Pre-requisites and criteria

9. Offices are evaluated based on the five key criteria; energy efficiency, water efficiency, sustainable management and operation and other green features. Under the assessment system, points are awarded for incorporating environmentally friendly features and practices within each of these main areas.

10. To be eligible for Green Mark for Office Interior, the office’s temperature setting should not be lower than 24°C. Besides key criteria such as Energy efficiency, Lighting, and Office Equipment, indoor environment air quality (IAQ) is an essential aspect of the scheme. To ensure the comfort and well-being of office occupants, tenants are expected to monitor and maintain good indoor air quality (IAQ) and conduct audits once every three years to ensure that recommended parameters are met. With the availability of overnight equipment management softwares, office occupants, can pre-set, back-up and shut down computers at night.

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About Building and Construction Authority

The Building and Construction Authority (BCA) of Singapore champions the development of an excellent built environment for Singapore. At BCA, our mission is to shape a safe, high quality, sustainable and friendly built environment, as these are four key elements where BCA has a significant influence. In doing so, we aim to differentiate Singapore’s built environment from those of other cities and contribute to a better quality of life for everyone in Singapore. Hence, our vision is to have "the best built environment for Singapore, our distinctive global city". BCA works closely with its education hub, the BCA Academy of the Built Environment, and industry partners to develop skills and expertise that help shape the best built environment for Singapore.

For more information, visit www.bca.gov.sg.

Fact sheet on Green Mark for Office Interiors

The Green Mark for Office Interiors scheme was launched in 2009. It was launched to promote the use of environmentally friendly features and sustainable practices by office tenants.

There are four ratings under the scheme:

- Platinum, Gold^{Plus}, Gold and Certified

Evaluation criteria

- Energy efficiency
- Water efficiency
- Sustainable management and operation
- Indoor environmental quality
- Other green features

Under the assessment system, points are awarded for incorporating environmentally friendly features and practices within each of these main areas.

Pre-requisites

- To be eligible for Green Mark for Office Interior, the office's temperature setting should not be lower than 24 °C.
- Besides key criteria such as Energy efficiency, Lighting, and Office Equipment, indoor environment air quality (IAQ) is an essential aspect of the scheme.
- To ensure the comfort and well-being of office occupants, tenants are expected to monitor and maintain good indoor air quality (IAQ) and conduct audits once every three years to ensure that recommended parameters are met.
- With the availability of overnight equipment management softwares, office occupants, can pre-set, back-up and shut down computers at night.

Benefits of Green Mark Office

- cost savings in utilities bills
- creates an environment that is both functional and comfortable
- bolsters workers' productivity

Examples of Green features

- Zoning of office space & scheduling of controls to improve energy efficiency
- Office fit-out and furniture made from recycled content
- Light motion sensors to sense space usage and lights are turned off automatically when rooms are not in use
- Providing dimmers and minimising general lighting by using focused task lighting
- Barrier-free, outdoor view with glare free, utilisation of natural lighting workstation layout arrangement.
- Video conferencing system reduces the need for work-related travel and carbon footprints
- Green Mark Platinum winners like Autodesk Asia has introduced an internal staircase to promote employee's interactions and reduce the need for lift travel between floors.