WELL Program Overview

FOR RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS

The first and only holistic, third-party verified certification for creating healthier homes.



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SECTION 01

Introduction

The WELL Building Standard

The WELL Building Standard (the WELL Standard) is a library of evidence-based strategies that put people at the center of how spaces are designed, operated and managed. Today, organizations have more ways than ever to implement these strategies, achieve business goals and earn recognition through several certifications.

As the leading certification program for healthy buildings, WELL provides the framework for organizations to apply these strategies and scale toward a long-term vision for health. Whether you pursue one strategy at a time - like improving air quality through enhanced ventilation - or aim for recognition through certification, the choice is yours. The program bundles strategies into two types of certifications: flagship, which require holistic implementation of WELL across all 10 concepts, and foundational, which address specific goals or project scopes. Once third-party validated by WELL Reviewers, these certifications serve as powerful signals that an organization has delivered on its commitment to well-being.

Our approach ensures that engagement with WELL provides deep rigor at every stage, regardless of where you begin. Every strategy implemented and certification achieved is backed by science, validated for performance and designed for impact.

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SECTION 02

Residential Project Scope

Eligibility & Project Scope

When a project registers for WELL, it is automatically assigned a specific project scope based on two key factors: its primary use type and its control relationship.

The **residential project scope** identifies the strategies that are relevant to residential projects. This scope is assigned to any project zoned or officially designated as housing by a governmental entity. This includes single-family homes, multifamily buildings, student housing, military housing and senior living facilities. Additionally, hospitality projects, such as hotels, are assigned the residential scope if they are designed or intended for occupancy of at least 30 days and the project maintains an owner-occupied control relationship.

Scoring & Strategy Applicability

The project scope assigned at enrollment affects four characteristics related to scoring and strategy applicability. The project scope determines:

- Which strategies and requirements are relevant to your pursuit of WELL
- Whether the strategy is required (i.e., mandatory) for flagship certification
- How many points are available for the strategy
- The applicability statement for each requirement within the strategy: to whom, to what and/or where the requirement applies and, if variable across constructs, the unique spatial or occupant scope for that construct

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SECTION 03

WELL Achievements

Residential projects can earn a range of WELL achievements, giving teams the flexibility to recognize progress in the areas that matter most to them and build toward more over time.

These WELL achievements were informed by the WELL for residential pilot, which has been widely adopted around the world, engaging projects across nearly 30 countries and representing more than 50,000 enrolled dwelling units. It has been successfully applied across a variety of housing types, from single-family homes and units in multifamily buildings to student housing and senior living accommodations, as well as across affordable and market-rate properties for both rent and sale.

Foundational Certifications

Foundational certifications consist of a subset of the strategies from the broader WELL Standard (as identified by IWBI) and are designed to address specific business goals or project scopes. They show thematic leadership. Foundational certifications are flexible by design, with no required baseline strategies or concept-specific point minimums, giving project teams full flexibility to select the strategies that best fit their project's unique design and health goals. Unlike flagship certification, there are no tiered award levels (e.g., Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum) for foundational certifications.

WELL Residence Certification

WELL Residence Certification is a foundational certification that focuses on the subset of strategies from the residential project scope that *most* directly impact how homes are designed and operated to support resident health, recognizing a significant commitment to resident health that goes well beyond best practice. Any project that has selected “residential” as the primary use type may pursue this foundational certification. To earn WELL Residence Certification, a project must achieve a minimum of 40 points across the pre-identified subset of strategies.

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Additional Opportunities for Recognition

Residential projects can build on their progress and showcase leadership in the areas that matter most to residents, owners and operators by earning additional WELL achievements. Strategies achieved through WELL Residence Certification translate directly to progress toward relevant WELL achievements, including:

- Projects where residential is the primary use type are eligible to pursue:
  - WELL Performance
- Projects where residential is the primary use type and the controlling organization is a non-occupying owner or developer are also eligible to pursue:
  - WELL Health and Safety
  - WELL Equity
  - WELL Operated
  - WELL Built

Foundational Certification	Minimum Points Achieved
WELL Residence	40
WELL Performance	23
WELL Health and Safety	15
WELL Equity	23
WELL Operated	30
WELL Built	40

Table 1. Minimum point thresholds required for each Foundational certification.

Flagship Certifications

Projects looking to pursue the highest mark of excellence for healthy buildings can pursue our flagship certification and be awarded WELL Bronze, WELL Silver, WELL Gold or WELL Platinum.

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This requires that projects meet certain baseline strategies that are tailored to their assigned scope, earn additional points than required for a foundational certification and be verified through on-site performance testing.

For flagship certification, residential projects may pursue all strategies deemed applicable to the residential project scope (i.e., not only the subset of strategies) and must achieve a minimum number of points across all ten WELL concepts. The available award levels include:

- WELL Bronze
- WELL Silver
- WELL Gold
- WELL Platinum

Flagship Certification	Minimum Points Achieved
WELL Bronze	70
WELL Silver	80
WELL Gold	90
WELL Platinum	110

Table 2. Minimum point thresholds required for each Flagship certification level (inclusive of baseline strategy points).

Choosing Your Path

The right achievement depends on how many strategies your project plans to implement and whether you are ready to commit to implementing all required baseline strategies and on-site testing. For many residential projects, WELL Residence will be the natural starting point; for those seeking the highest level of recognition, flagship certification is the next step.

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	WELL Residence Certification (Foundational)	Flagship Certification
Point threshold	40	70-110 points (inclusive of ~30 points worth of required baseline strategies)
Concept point minimums	No	Yes
Levels	No	Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum
Standard	Subset of strategies with residential project scope from the One WELL Standard	All strategies with residential project scope from the One WELL Standard
On-site testing	Optional	Mandatory
Minimum requirements	No required baseline strategies	Required baseline strategies

Table 3. Comparison of WELL Residence and Flagship Certifications for residential projects.

Precertification

Project teams also have the opportunity to pursue precertification for all foundational and flagship certifications except WELL Performance. Precertification is an optional, early-stage design review that allows teams to officially demonstrate and market that a project is on track for their certification target, even before construction is substantially complete.

To earn precertification, a project must demonstrate a commitment to implementing the minimum point threshold required for the targeted certification (e.g., at least 40 points for WELL Residence certification, at least 90 points for WELL Gold certification).

Precertification does not require construction to be complete and therefore the review typically evaluates documentation related to the intended design and future operational policies of the project. Once the project reaches substantial completion, the project team must submit the remaining required verification methods (such as as-built photos, final invoices, or on-site testing results) to achieve certification.

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Project Boundary

Project teams must clearly define their project boundary at the start of enrollment. When defining the project boundary, teams should ensure it meets the following criteria:

- **Has a clear identity:** The boundary must be clearly distinguished from adjacent spaces not pursuing certification (e.g., via a wall, fence, lot line) and succinctly described in the project name or with a singular distinct address.
- **Has consistent application of strategies:** The same set of strategies and selected tiers must be applied across the entire project boundary. For mixed-use developments (e.g., combined residential and commercial assets), enrolling the developments as two separate projects is strongly recommended so each scope can utilize the applicable scoring construct (e.g., residential scoring construct for the residential assets and the occupant scoring construct for the commercial assets).
- **Includes only areas that can undergo review at the same time:** All spaces within the project boundary must be ready to undergo review simultaneously (e.g., all dwelling units within a residential development). Areas that require phased or separate review timelines must be enrolled as separate projects.

The project boundary may not unreasonably exclude portions of a building, space or site to simply gain an advantage in meeting strategy requirements. Generally, the project boundary should encompass the entirety of, or a clearly defined area within, a building, master site or community. If this is not possible to do given the requirements above (i.e., clear identity, consistent application of strategies and same review timeline), the controlling organization may need to enroll the building or community as multiple separate projects.

For avoidance of doubt, the project boundary must include the following areas if they fall under the controlling organization's ownership or control:

- The interior of all dwelling units within the multifamily building or community of single-family homes
- Detached private space associated with the dwelling unit(s) (e.g., yard, garage, shed, guest house, pool house)
- Attached common spaces (e.g., lobbies, corridors, gyms, clubhouses, yards)

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- Any outdoor areas that directly serve and are primarily intended for project occupants (e.g., walkways, green spaces, outdoor seating), though this exterior square footage is excluded from the *Project Area* (see below) for billing purposes

All pursued strategies must be met across the indoor spaces within the project boundary, unless otherwise noted in the strategy requirements (the Applicability statement) which may state that the strategy must also be met in outdoor areas. Some strategies allow spaces located within a specified distance of the project boundary (but not within the project boundary) to count toward requirement compliance. In this case, the spaces outside of the project boundary must only meet the specific requirements of the relevant strategy and are not subject to any other strategy or project requirements.

Project Area

In addition to the project boundary, project teams must also disclose the project area. The project area should:

- Include the gross interior floor area across all spaces within the project boundary as measured from the exterior faces of exterior walls or centerlines of dividing walls. This includes, as applicable, basements, mezzanines, intermediate-floored tiers and mechanical penthouses with headroom height of 2.3 m [7.5 ft] or greater.
- Exclude outdoor areas (e.g., building grounds) and any non-enclosed, roofed-over areas (e.g., covered exterior walkways, open porches, terraces or steps, roof overhangs), air shafts, pipe trenches, chimneys and floor area dedicated to motor vehicle parking and circulation.

Project Completion Status

Each project also requires a completion status which determines the project's eligible verification stage(s) and scoring contributions to the WELL Score (if part of WELL at scale). The completion status is one of the following:

- **Occupiable:** The project is either occupied or ready for occupancy (i.e., commissioned and legally authorized for use).
- **Under construction:** The project is in design, actively under construction or is complete but not yet ready for occupancy (i.e., waiting on final inspections).

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Projects with Multiple Dwelling Units and/or Buildings

A single project boundary may encompass a grouping of multiple dwelling units or multiple buildings. The grouping may be physically connected (multiple dwelling units within one building) or not physically connected (multiple homes within a community or multiple buildings on a campus), provided the following conditions are met:

- The grouping must be under the same ownership and management.
- Dwelling units or buildings within the grouping must be located adjacent to each other (i.e., there is no land unaffiliated with the location intervening) and the project boundary must encompass all outdoor space affiliated with the enrolled properties and controlled by the controlling organization.
- Dwelling units or buildings within the grouping must be related to each other (e.g., part of a corporate or education campus or resort) and the project name must accurately describe the grouping.

Since the grouping constitutes a single project, they must pursue the same set of strategies as follows:

- The strategy must be pursued in every dwelling unit and/or building.
- If a strategy offers multiple options for compliance, all dwelling units and/or buildings within the project must target the same option.
- For tiered strategies, all dwelling units and/or buildings within the project must target the same tier. If different tiers are implemented, the lowest tier will be awarded.

Ineligible Projects

The following projects do not currently qualify for enrollment, unless granted an explicit exception by IWBI:

- Undeveloped land without an associated building
- Temporary facilities or structures that are assembled for less than one year (e.g., field offices, site trailers, temporary event pavilions)

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SECTION 04

Roles & Responsibilities

Controlling Organization: The controlling organization is the legal entity that controls the portfolio and the project boundary(ies) within that are being certified, whether through ownership, development rights, or lease. In circumstances where multiple owners hold rights over an enrolled property or properties, a single enrollee must be identified as the authorized decision-maker for purposes of the WELL program. In such cases, the WELL team must submit a Confirmation of Primary Owner's Authority form. They are the organization that owns, possesses (including as a lessee), or controls the listed properties and holds the authority to make decisions pertaining to them; this may be the owner or a representative delegated responsibility by the owning or controlling organization. They are responsible for authorizing enrollment of the project that will undergo review and will accept the agreement to participate in WELL. They will be required to validate various documents used to demonstrate that certain requirements are satisfied. Note that the controlling organization may sell the properties without affecting the historical record of previously earned WELL certifications.

Administrator: Administrators are Users who act as project managers and oversee the process for pursuing WELL achievements for project(s) within the portfolio. Administrators serve as the primary point of contact and must be copied on all correspondence with IWBI and the WELL Reviewer. This individual will also be the recipient of a comprehensive WELL report following documentation review and performance verification, as well as the WELL award package. The administrator is ultimately responsible for the overall quality and completeness of the documents submitted to the Platform and is expected to complete a thorough quality control check of all documentation and forms prior to submission for review.

WELL Coaching Support: Upon payment of the enrollment fee, project teams gain the opportunity to access WELL coaching support and other resources. WELL coaching support is available to answer questions, share helpful resources and tools and provide guidance throughout the engagement with IWBI. Coaching contacts from IWBI do not play a role in approving WELL Strategies or making certification rulings.

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WELL Reviewer: When a WELL team submits evidence, IWBI will assign a WELL Reviewer to that submission. The WELL Reviewer is the individual responsible for reviewing submitted evidence and, if relevant, performance testing results to validate whether the targeted WELL strategies have been achieved.

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SECTION 05

Verification Guidance

Please note that reviews will not commence until mid 2027 when One WELL formally launches. The verification guidance provided within these pages serves as an interim resource for project teams participating in early enrollment for residential projects. It is designed to help early adopters begin evaluating design strategies, aligning construction processes and preparing documentation ahead of the ability to submit for review.

Each strategy consists of one or more requirements, which detail the specific criteria that must be met to be awarded the strategy. Pursuit of WELL strategies requires that teams provide evidence to verify that requirements have been successfully implemented. If it is onerous for a team to provide evidence for every dwelling unit (e.g., if the design of the dwelling units vary substantially but are all still in alignment with the strategies), the team may request an audit-based verification method for relevant strategies.

During the verification process, WELL Reviewers determine whether a strategy is met by ruling on the evidence. If, at any point during the verification process, a Reviewer becomes aware of a discrepancy when reviewing the submission, the Reviewer reserves the right to pend and comment.

Minimum Scope: The minimum scope indicates the condition that must be present (i.e., what or whom) for the strategy to be implemented. When a minimum scope is defined for a strategy, that scope must be present for a project to earn points for that Strategy. If the minimum scope does not exist within the project, the entire Strategy can be marked as Not Applicable. When the Strategy is marked as Not Applicable, it will not be reviewed, it will not contribute points to the project's score or related achievements and, if it is a baseline strategy, it will be removed from the list of minimum requirements for flagship certification.

For example, a project that does not offer food most operating days should indicate that Strategy N1.1 (a required baseline strategy) is Not Applicable. The project may now earn a flagship certification without providing a variety of fruits and vegetables.

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Not Applicable: Within a Strategy, some requirements may apply to the project while others do not. If the areas or products applicable to the requirement do not exist within the project boundary, the requirement or criteria should be marked as Not Applicable, which waives the verification for that requirement.

For example, Strategy A3.4 has exhaust requirements for bathrooms, kitchens and clothes dryers. A project with bathrooms and kitchens but no clothes dryers must meet the requirements for bathrooms and kitchens and should mark the clothes dryer exhaust requirements as Not Applicable. For verification, the project will only need to submit verification for the bathrooms and kitchens.

Alignment with Local Code: WELL requirements are designed to complement, not conflict with, local building codes and applicable laws. If a WELL requirement directly conflicts with a local code, project teams can submit an Alternative Adherence Path (AAP) with the relevant code text (with key sections highlighted) as an alternative to the specific requirement, criteria or subcriteria to which it pertains.

Verification Guidance

The Verification Guidance section of the excel-based scorecard categorizes the type of evidence that is needed to demonstrate the requirements have been met. This guidance serves as an interim resource for project teams participating in early enrollment for residential projects. It is designed to help early adopters begin preparing documentation ahead of the ability to submit for formal review. The categories of verification guidance are as follows:

Proof of Product: Evidence that shows the product meets the strategy requirements. Examples of this type of evidence include technical cut sheets, Safety Data Sheets (SDS) or manufacturer documentation detailing the physical composition, materials, emissions and performance metrics of installed products.

Proof of Placement: Evidence that shows the product is being used in/for the project and in the correct quantity. Examples of this type of evidence include photographs, receipts, invoices and Engineer Letters of Assurance. If a specific installation location is required by the strategy (e.g., height, room), the evidence must show the specified location. Examples of this type of evidence include drawings, elevations, maps and photographs annotated with measurements.

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Photographs must clearly identify the date and location where they were taken (e.g., via geotags, file naming conventions, folder structure, annotations).

Policy and/or Operations Schedules: Evidence that shows the project's enacted policies, programs or initiatives, accompanied by a narrative explaining how they are communicated to project stakeholders (e.g., employees, residents). Examples of this type of evidence include direct copies or excerpts from company or building handbooks, legal documents, emails, newsletters and policies or laws enacted by a local government that apply to the project.

Performance Test Results: Evidence of the project's environmental conditions from on-site measurements. Examples of this type of evidence include data from on-site measurements conducted by qualified testing personnel, tests reports from independent qualified professionals (e.g., radon testing) and performance data collected through permanently installed sensors.

Performance testing requirements for testing parameters conducted by qualified testing personnel, including methodologies and guidelines, are outlined in the *WELL Performance Verification Guidebook for Residential Projects*. Performance testing requirements for testing parameters conducted by independent qualified professionals are outlined in the respective strategy (e.g., Strategy A6.4 for radon testing). For sensor data, project teams must submit the collected data via IWBI's data template, along with annotated drawings and photographs that demonstrate proper sensor density and placement across the project.

Other: Additional evidence required to verify the strategy. Examples of this type of evidence include proof of meeting a standard, modeling (i.e., simulation) reports and project team summaries detailing exactly how a specific WELL requirement was addressed and fulfilled in the project design or operations.

Verification Stages

Evidence to verify the implementation of WELL is categorized into three stages based on the project's timeline:

- **Plan-stage evidence:** Represents early-stage design plans, draft policies, or operational policies. It reflects what the project *intends* to build or implement. This stage counts towards precertification.

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- **Implement-stage evidence:** Represents actual, as-built physical conditions or fully enacted operational policies. It reflects what has actually been implemented or put into practice. This stage counts towards certification but can also contribute towards precertification if submitted alongside Plan-stage verification for other strategies.
- **Maintain-stage evidence:** Represents required ongoing actions for certain strategies. It reflects active maintenance and renewal requirements. This stage counts towards renewing and keeping your certifications active.

Evidence for all verification stages must contain sufficient detail to demonstrate compliance with the relevant WELL strategies. When submitting evidence for each strategy, the project team should note whether the evidence is Plan-stage or Implement-stage. During review, the WELL Reviewer may adjust or correct the stage categorization if needed. The WELL Reviewer will indicate how a strategy is awarded based on the verification stage:

- **Anticipated – Plan-stage:** Awarded when evidence for Plan-stage verification is submitted. This review status indicates the strategy is conditionally verified with Plan-stage evidence for a precertification award and requires additional Implement-stage evidence for a certification award.
- **Achieved:** Awarded when evidence for Implement-stage verification is submitted. This review status indicates the strategy is fully verified and will not require any additional evidence at certification review, provided the implemented conditions within the project boundary remain unchanged.

A project will be awarded their eligible certifications (as **Certified** or **Precertified**) when the defined rules (which includes a minimum number of points) for the respective certification have been met. For **Certification** to be awarded, construction must be substantially complete across the project boundary. In addition, all targeted strategies must be verified by Implement-stage evidence that reflects final as-built conditions.

When a project has pursued Precertification and is moving on to a review to pursue Certification:

- Strategies that were already verified using Implement-stage evidence do not need to be re-submitted, provided that relevant conditions have not changed.
- Strategies that previously relied on Plan-stage evidence must be confirmed with new Implement-stage evidence to prove the planned strategy was fully implemented or enacted.

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- In a subsequent review, teams may pursue additional strategies which were not targeted during precertification and/or remove strategies which were targeted during precertification.

Performance Verification

Certain WELL strategies allow or require direct on-site testing to verify environmental parameters in the Air, Water, Light, Thermal Comfort and Sound concepts. Depending on the strategy, project teams may have the option to choose between an on-site testing pathway or a prescriptive design pathway, while other strategies require on-site testing as the sole method of compliance.

Qualified Testing Personnel

On-site testing must be conducted by qualified testing personnel*, which may include trained WELL Performance Testing Agents listed in the IWBI Membership Directory. Project teams select and contract directly with their chosen testing provider.

Qualified testing personnel must conduct on-site measurements according to the procedures outlined in the *WELL Performance Verification Guidebook for Residential Projects (the Guidebook)*. The Guidebook details the testing parameters within the qualified testing professional's scope of practice, omitting third-party or specialized assessments like radon measurement and envelope commissioning. Once testing is complete, data collected during on-site testing is submitted via the Platform and reviewed by a WELL Reviewer to determine compliance with the required test processes and thresholds.

**To support project accessibility during the early enrollment period, IWBI allows other qualified testing personnel (such as certified indoor air quality inspectors or licensed environmental engineers) to conduct on-site testing, as long as they meet the qualifications required to test the relevant parameter as listed in the Guidebook.*

However, the qualifications for testing personnel are subject to change and testing personnel may be required to carry additional qualifications in the future. IWBI will give projects several months advance notice ahead of making any changes to the qualifications for testing personnel. If a project has a signed contract with a professional prior to any changes made in the Guidebook, that professional is permitted to conduct the testing if they meet the original qualification requirements from the earlier version of the Guidebook.

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SECTION 06

Strategy Review & Award Process

Every review is conducted by an independent, third-party WELL Reviewer assigned by IWBI who is responsible for evaluating all submitted verification and confirming whether strategy requirements are fully satisfied.

Each review includes an Open Comment Period (OCP) whereby the Reviewer provides questions about all strategies still pending after the initial review. The project team is given a 60 day window to respond to the open questions from the Reviewer. No additional strategies can be submitted for review as part of the response during the OCP. Prior to the OCP, when there are uncertainties regarding the project scope that make it impossible or unproductive to complete the review or there is significant information missing from a documentation submission, the WELL Reviewer may issue a mid-review clarification (MRC). An MRC pauses the review timeline and gives the project team up to 30 days to respond before official review comments are issued. The timing and number of reviews available to the project team depends on the project's enrollment type. If appeals or additional reviews are needed due to unresolved issues, additional fees may apply.

Reviews

Project teams can choose between two enrollment options, which vary in the number of reviews and the number of strategies allowed to be submitted for review.

Regardless of the enrollment option, all dwelling units associated with a single project enrollment are required to comply with the established project boundary criteria. As part of this, the dwelling units must:

- Be located in the same building or community
- Pursue the exact same set of strategies
- Submit for review together at the same time

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Pay upfront: All-inclusive pricing per project

All-inclusive single project enrollments include up to three **"unlimited strategy"** reviews (each with an OCP) within a three-year term, during which the project can document individual strategies, precertification(s), foundational certifications and flagship certification.

Pay per review: Review-based pricing per project

Review-based single project enrollments pay for each review before it is submitted. One **"limited strategy"** review may be used to document up to 50 individual strategies with Implement-stage verification (enough to earn a foundational certification and contribute to flagship certification) or to document any number of strategies with Plan-stage verification to contribute towards precertification. A project that wants to document more than 50 strategies in a single review may pay for two **"unlimited strategy"** reviews to document any number of strategies with Implement-stage verification, as well as to document Plan-stage verification towards precertification(s).

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