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## Examples of Things That Can Go Wrong on a Green Building Project

Green Building is [all the rage in the United States](#). Whether it be a LEED project, or just a promise to the property owner to build or make a building more efficient and sustainable, as 2010 passes onto 2011, those in the construction industry are quite likely to run into projects with at least some green elements.

When bidding, contracting and working on these projects, it's important to know what might go wrong. After all, if you have no idea what things can go wrong, you have no way to prepare for them (or charge for the extra risk).

There's no way to enumerate all of the risks...but here are a few to get you thinking about it:

1) Vegetative Roofing: In some areas, these so-called "green roofs" are becoming popular. The most ambitious green roof program is likely found in Portland, [which we've discussed in a previous post](#). Essentially, vegetation is planted on the roof of a building to better insulate it, reduce the heat island effect in the area, and better control water runoff. The downside? Well, it's quite a bit heavier than a standard roof, and the construction and design of the structure should accommodate the extra weight.

2) Rainwater Runoff: Plan on channeling rainwater into storing containers to use within the property as waste water? Be sure to contract with someone with experience, because the control of rainwater is different than the disposing of it through ordinary guttering systems.

3) Greenwashing: It's popular to be green, and there's an absence of real regulation prohibiting businesses from advertising its products and services as "green" – which, really, is undefined. So, when incorporating a service or product into your technology, make sure you select vendors, products, services and the like that will live up to their marketing.

4) New, Untested Technologies: Even the stuff that isn't fraudulently labeled green may still present problems, as many technologies advertised as green may simply not perform as expected, since the technologies and products are new and haven't been tested over time. The lesson? Keep your vendors on the hook for promises made by their products, and be cautious about relaying promises that are uncertain.

5) Human Interference: Green buildings and green technologies are not insulated from human intervention. Especially considering energy performance, the human factor can be great – as humans are the ones that will control energy use (such as using more than the allocated energy amounts), and generally doing things that can affect energy use (covering windows, for example) .

6) Certification Problems: Rating and certification system (like LEED) are not easy to guarantee. The certification decision is left to a third party, certification can be taken away, and certification can be challenged. Don't be too concerned – many projects work toward a certification and get it. But know the road ahead.

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- [Is Failure To Achieve LEED Certification Consequential Damages?](http://www.constructionlawmonitor.com)  
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