



What is a “Green Built” Home?

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Often I am asked “what exactly is a Green Built™ home?” Green Built™ homes can take many shapes and forms, but in most cases it can be quite difficult to tell a green home from a typical home simply by appearance. And since any builder can say their home is “green”, just how can you tell the difference?

In order to help homeowners and builders, there is a statewide program available locally which will assure your new home meets national green building standards. A home certified through Green Built™ Michigan follows the national Model Green Home Building Guidelines. Seeing the Green Built™ logo on a home means it has met or exceeded a tough, national standard for quality.

The seven key principles for design and construction of the home are as follows:

- Lot Design, Preparation & Development
- Resource Efficiency
- Energy Efficiency
- Indoor/Outdoor Water Use
- Indoor Environmental Quality
- Operation, Maintenance & Homeowner Education
- Global Impact

Green Built™ homes are certified by an independent, third party inspector who looks at all aspects of the home from the planning stage through completion. Points are earned through a scoring system within each of the key principles and once certain point levels are reached, a home can earn a Bronze, Silver or Gold overall rating.

Given current energy bills, you don’t want your dollars floating out the window or through a leaking duct. For that reason, the most critical principle is that of energy efficiency. As a starting point, all Green Built™ certified homes must meet the strict requirements the EPA ENERGY STAR® home program. This will include a complete energy analysis of the home design combined with independent testing of the final product. The testing includes air leakage tests, as well as duct leakage testing and even thermal image testing. It is a very thorough audit process which will ensure that the energy usage of your new home will be far less than the average home--in most cases 30% to 50% better.

So you know you will save money and energy with a Green Built™ certified home, but what else makes it different from standard constructed homes? Answer: Improved indoor air quality. This has a direct impact on the family occupying the home. Many materials, including most paint, let off gasses which can have a negative effect for occupants with respiratory ailments like asthma and allergies. Also, technology is used to bring in fresh, filtrated air all in an effort to improve indoor air quality for the occupants.

Lasting homeowner education is fundamental to insure ongoing home performance. Activities and habits in the home can have both positive and negative effects on the home. So the homeowner is trained on the systems and within the home.

Using recycled materials, on-site recycling programs, low water use appliances, tankless water heaters, dual flush toilets, drought resistant landscapes and other features contribute to a homes overall rating. In addition, the Land Use section looks for effective land management combined with good site layout, tree preservation and minimized site disturbance.

Keep in mind, a typical home can have more of a negative impact on the environment than your automobile. Green Built™ homes are awarded points for conservation techniques and the use of “green” materials and practices. So not only do you save money, breath cleaner air, live in a more durable structure, but you also can sleep better at night knowing you did your part to keep our environment clean.

All combined, these key principles reduce the overall impact your home has on your wallet as well as on the environment. For more information or to review the Green Built™ scoring guidelines visit www.greenbuiltmichigan.org.

Tips to Improve Your Home's Energy Performance

[Click here for a Home Energy Checklist](#) to help you reduce your energy use and costs

More on Green Homes

A Green Built™ home is [more energy efficient, safer, healthier, and friendlier to the environment than other homes](#). They are built by trained building professionals. They must meet a tough, national standard for green quality. They must be certified by an independent, third-party rater. In a word, a Green Built™ certified home is **better**. Are you ready to build a Green Built™ certified home? [Click here for a brochure](#). Want to see a "green home" in person?

Past

Specialized, niche home builders began constructing resource-efficient, environmentally sensitive homes in the early 1970's. The home building industry coined the phrase "green building" in the late 1980's, turning a movement into a quiet revolution. People have sought green homes and green features for years without many resources. Many consumers are looking for ways to be energy and resource efficient at work, at play and at home.

Present

In Michigan there are a number of residential green certification programs. Six years ago, the Home & Building Association of Greater Grand Rapids sponsored Green Built™, Inc. Since its inception in 2000 as a local program, Green Built™, Inc. has grown to a statewide program: Green Built™ Michigan. Now green certification is available to any member of the Michigan Association of Home Builders. So you can now have a Green Built™ certified home wherever you live in Michigan.

Good News for Consumers

Today, new homes are twice as energy-efficient as they were 30 years ago, thanks to cutting-edge green building techniques and technologies available for new and remodeled homes.

Nationwide, roughly 75,000 homes have been built using local green building program guidelines since 1990, more that 14,000 of them in 2004 alone. More than 1,000 builders participate in local green building programs.

The [National Association of Home Builders \(NAHB\) Research Center recently introduced voluntary Model Green Home Building Guidelines](#) to bring environmentally friendly building techniques to mainstream builders and home builders associations. The guidelines offer builder and market-driven solutions in seven areas, including lot preparation and design, resource efficiency, energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, occupancy comfort and indoor environmental quality, and operation maintenance and homeowner education.

More specifically, homes built today use myriad green building techniques and technologies that:

- **Lower operating costs**---homes are equipped with more efficient heating and cooling systems and use less water, resulting in lower monthly utility bills. Improved construction methods better protect homes from rain and ground water and reduce upkeep and replacement costs, while use of recycled materials helps conserve natural resources.
- **Reduce maintenance issues**---landscaping uses native or drought-resistant plants and grasses, and decks made of pressure-treated lumber or synthetic materials need no sealing or staining.
- **Increase home value**---homeowners with documented lower monthly utility bills are reporting higher resale values.
- **Improve environmental quality**---moisture control products and low VOC paints contribute to a more comfortable indoor environment, and efficient use of materials helps conserve natural resources.

NAHB's guidelines were developed in a consensus process by a group of more than 60 stakeholders representing key players in the green home building industry.

Future

Green building is a growing trend among home builders nationwide, with more than 30 successful green building programs now in existence. Thirteen green building programs are owned or operated by members or affiliates of the NAHB in Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Texas and Washington. More than 15 more will be organized with support from the [Green Building Initiative](#), an organization created to help implement NAHB's Model Green Home Building Guidelines in markets across the country.

National Voluntary Model Green Home Building Guidelines

- Green Building is the act of incorporating environmental considerations and resource/energy efficiency into every step of the home building and land development process.
- NAHB's Model Green Home Building Guidelines are the nation's first voluntary guidelines and are the first to be developed by a coalition of builders, researchers, environmentalists and government agencies. The Guidelines establish a model for builders in the U.S. that are engaged in or want to engage in green development, design and construction
- NAHB launched the guidelines in January 2005 at the International Builders' Show in Orlando, Fla.
- Although homes built today are 100 percent more energy-efficient than those built during the 1970's, green building has been primarily the province of high-end, niche builders who cater to a wealthy clientele. Those days are over.
- The New guidelines will help all builders construct more energy-efficient, environmentally sensitive new homes in different price ranges and climate conditions. And most importantly, they will help the industry build green homes that are affordable.
- NAHB undertook the guidelines project a year and a half ago at the urging of members who need research and education on building resource-efficient homes that are both affordable and customized to local conditions.
- The guidelines offer voluntary, builder-and market-driven green solutions for:
 - ✓ **Lot design and preparation**
 - ✓ **Resource, energy and water efficiency**
 - ✓ **Indoor environmental quality**
 - ✓ **Operation, maintenance and homeowner operation**
 - ✓ **Global impact**
 - ✓ **Site planning and land development**
- Developed for new single-family homes, the guidelines also can be modified for use with multifamily and custom homes as well as with remodeling projects for existing homes.
- Many local home builders associations will use the guidelines as a blueprint to create their own custom, voluntary green building programs, which would provide criteria, research, education and promotion to home builders in local markets. These programs would reflect needs specific to the market such as climate and land topography.
- The Guidelines were developed under contract by the NAHB Research Center in a consensus process involving more than 60 stakeholders from the green building industry, including architects, manufacturers, home builders, environmentalists, government agencies, suppliers and trade association.
- The Research Center is a wholly-owned subsidiary of NAHB, and is the research and development leader in the home and building industry.

- NAHB members are the driving force behind green building today. NAHB members construct about 80 percent of all new homes built in the United States, and home building is a powerful engine of economic prosperity.
- Thanks to this commitment, the home buyers of tomorrow will benefit from reduced maintenance costs, improved environmental quality and better energy efficiency.
- NAHB's Model Green Home Building Guidelines are a milestone in the effort to provide safe, decent, affordable housing for all Americans and conserve our environment.