

HOW TO BUILD AN ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE HOME



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Doing the right thing for the environment. We hear it all of the time. Many of us are committed, particularly when it comes to common household items. We often take the time to sort bottles and cans and place newspapers in their designated recycling bin in the home or garage.

Often times we think of the little things when protecting the environment. But what about the big things? Many of us never consider the environment, for instance, when building a new home. There are many ways to think about an environmentally responsible home. Here are several items to discuss with your builder.

The Site Plan

The first thing you should look at is the site plan for your new home. Does your builder utilize the land he builds on in an environmentally responsible way? Are as many trees as possible left on the property or was the land simply cleared to build the home? Also,

will trees and shrubs be planted

in any way for you to replace those that were lost? Strategically planted landscaping not only helps the environment, but can help reduce energy costs as well.



When looking at the home plan, discuss ventilation and airflow to ensure fresh air comes into your home. Check the water flow and drains to make sure they function well. This will not only benefit your family, but also the land around you. Ensure that your home has proper areas for both trash removal and recycling.

Responsible Building Materials

On both the exterior and interior of your home, there are numerous products that can be used that are environmentally responsible.

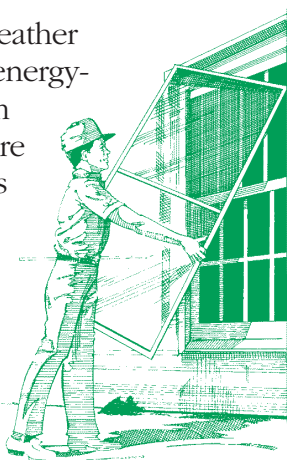
Many building products are

available with various amounts of recycled materials; insulation is a good example. In fact, the fiber glass insulation manufactured in the United States utilizes 14 billion pounds of pre- and post-consumer glass annually, thus diverting it from the solid waste stream.

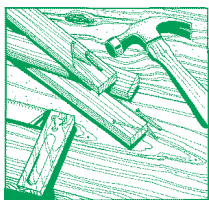
Besides just the recycled content, look at the energy efficiency of building products as well. Products that are energy efficient are environmentally responsible. They require less energy to function and contribute fewer carbon dioxide emissions to contribute to the Greenhouse Effect. Make sure your home will be insulated to the latest energy standards, such as the IECC. Ensure that the builder seals the home properly to eliminate air infiltration



using caulking and weather stripping. Make sure energy-efficient glass or storm windows and doors are provided. Also discuss with your builder energy efficient heating and cooling systems and lighting and appliances. In the long run, they are more environmentally responsible and economical.



More natural products tend to be environmentally responsible as well. Wood or tile floors are easier to handle, particularly for individuals with respiratory ailments like asthma and allergies. If covering the floor with an area rug is necessary, choose cottons or wools versus man-made fibers. Natural fiber products are preferred as man-made fibers do nothing to minimize electromagnetic fields, nor do they help minimize formaldehyde emissions.



Seek wood for closets and shelving where possible, rather than synthetic products. Marble and granite surfaces also provide a natural look and are a more environmentally responsible choice.

Also ask your builder to use paints and finishes low in toxic compounds. This is an important item in a healthier indoor environment.



Central, fresh-air ventilation systems with heat recovery to control moisture, odors and contaminants generated by occupants are important, too.

Indoor Air Quality Counts, Too

In addition to the building materials used within a home, concern for good indoor air quality is another important item to discuss with your builder. Concerns about homes being built too tight for proper air ventilation continue to make news today. Proper air ventilation can prevent breathing chemicals or emissions from synthetic and man-made household products and contribute to good indoor air quality in your home. Just as you can seek more natural product choices, you can look for responsible building products that offer low levels of volatile organic compounds (or VOCs) and are therefore IAQ-friendly. One way to do this is to ask for, or look for, the GREENGUARD Indoor Air Quality Certified™ mark on a product. For instance, CertainTeed's fiber glass insulation line is GREENGUARD Certified which provides you with independent



assurance of IAQ excellence. CertainTeed's insulation products have been tested for emissions of formaldehyde, VOCs, respirable particles, and other pollutants using stringent environmental protocols. The products are tested when newly

manufactured which is when the highest possible emissions are present. Other gaseous emissions such as ozone, carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide are monitored as well. All tested products must meet the GREENGUARD standards or they are not certified. GREENGUARD certified products contribute very low levels of pollutants to the indoor environment.

By keeping environmental responsibility in mind when building a new home, you'll have a healthier dwelling for years to come.



For more energy efficiency tips, call the CertainTeed Home Institute at 1-800-233-8990 or visit the web site at www.certainteed.com.

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