



## Community Development Department

23 Russell Boulevard-Davis, California 95616  
530/757-5610 Fax: 530/757-5660 TDD: 530/757-5666

# The Benefits of Green Building

Utilizing green building products and practices in homebuilding and remodeling projects results in quality homes and financial savings for you. Even the smallest effort can make a big difference. While particular benefits will vary depending on the specific choices made by the builder and homeowner, and to what extent green building practices are employed, the general benefits are:

## Financial Savings

Green building construction standards and products make homes more energy efficient by being well insulated and well sealed. Efficient windows, appliances, lighting and other household equipment also help add to the savings and keep your monthly electricity bills low. Up to 65% lower! And with energy prices rising and non-renewable fuels being depleted, an energy efficient home is asset we can all appreciate for years to come. Water bills are also reduced through low-flow equipment and thoughtful land use.

Homes built following green building standards may also qualify for special "green" financing. Called an Energy Efficient Mortgage (EEM), they can offer you more purchasing power.

## More Comfort

Comfortable with year-round sun exposure, comfortable with ambient temperature and lack of drafts, comfortable with your utility bills - 'comfortable' can mean a lot of things. Starting with good energy design, green building helps to ensure that your home is inherently more comfortable. If you're building new, proper orientation of your home can take advantage of the sun's natural heat in the cooler months, while avoiding too much sun in the warmer ones, to save on energy costs. Tight construction also helps keep energy costs and drafts down. For everyone, better insulation and energy efficient windows, appliances, and lighting contribute to a comfortable environment while using less energy.

## Healthier Living

Chemicals emitted from building materials can be a potential source of health problems if not properly addressed. For example, cabinets, counter tops, and furniture are often made from pressed wood products such as particleboard or MDF, which are typically manufactured with formaldehyde-based adhesives. This formaldehyde can offgas into your home for years. Unfortunately for your family's health, formaldehyde is a known human carcinogen according to the World Health Organization; it can also cause watery eyes, headaches, fatigue, and nausea. Paint and floor finishes can also contain formaldehyde and other chemicals that are not healthy to breathe, especially for small children. Green building encourages use of products and materials that reduce or eliminate these sources of indoor pollution. These include a wide range of products such as low-VOC paint, solvent-free adhesives, and water-based wood finishes that

not only eliminate many of the suspected and known carcinogens, but often perform better than traditional products.

Carpet can also emit harmful chemicals and be a source of indoor pollution, so green building guidelines encourage using low-emitting carpets and pads and simply reducing the amount of carpeted areas. Installation by tacking rather than gluing also helps reduce toxic emissions. Finally, since carpet fibers can trap dirt and pollution tracked in from outdoors, and can harbor mold growth if in a humid environment or not allowed to completely dry out after getting damp or flooded, hard-surface flooring with area rugs or modular carpet tiles that can easily be taken away for cleaning or drying is encouraged. Alternate flooring options include FSC Certified wood, cork, and bamboo.

Finally, ventilation is key to keeping and maintaining indoor air quality for healthier living. Green building practices encourage well-sealed duct systems, sealed combustion gas appliances, and a balanced or slightly positive pressure ventilation system, which work together to improve indoor air quality and keep you comfortable and healthy.

Adequate ventilation is especially important in green building as it prevents mold and other potentially dangerous allergens from forming. With tighter construction of the exterior envelope, ventilation is required to allow excess moisture to escape so it doesn't get trapped in your home's living space and building cavities, causing health problems for your family and moisture damage to the building components.

### **Less Maintenance and Higher Durability**

Current building codes establish minimum construction standards that protect your safety. Green building supplements building codes by using premium materials that are more durable and construction practices that often exceed building code requirements. Together, these qualities enhance your home's performance and reduce maintenance and replacement costs, thereby raising its overall value.

Examples of such long-lasting materials and their applications include decking made from recycled plastic and wood fibers, durable tile or linoleum for floors, 50-year roofing materials, and fiber-cement siding. These outperform their traditional counterparts by reducing maintenance and replacement costs.

### **Knowing You're Being Good to the Environment**

Green building products and practices offer you the assurance that you are following environmentally friendly guidelines that help preserve our natural resources. A socially responsible step worthy of recognition, building green makes a strong statement about your dedication to the community and the environment.

Farther reaching than your home itself, green building promotes the use of local products and materials that help stimulate local businesses and a diverse economy. This keeps your dollars working in your neighborhood and reduces energy consumption because there are less transportation costs. Materials like engineered wood products are encouraged because they efficiently make use of waste wood pieces, reducing environmental impacts of the wood industry. Recycled-content products productively use materials that would otherwise need to be hauled to landfills, and also reduce costs and impacts of producing products from virgin materials.

Green building is not a passing trend. Informing and educating you, the California homeowner, about the value of green building standards is Build It Green's goal. We believe that through education we can all make a difference that will improve the way we live - [today and tomorrow](#).