

WHAT IS A GREEN HOME?

Energy efficiency, health, and comfort all are hallmarks of a green house. Such properties often are called high performance, eco-friendly or energy efficient homes.

Common elements

While some homes are certified as green by housing or environmental industry groups, properties don't necessarily have to carry a label to be considered green. What all such homes have in common is a desire by its owners to live in a property that incorporates systems and features that lower utility bills, improve health and comfort, and minimize the impact on the planet.

Green upgrades

For existing homes, there's a vast array of strategies for achieving greater efficiency. They include small, inexpensive upgrades, like installing low-flow water faucets, energy efficient light bulbs, and programmable thermostats. In addition, less visible elements, such as efficient insulation and air sealing, create a more comfortable, less drafty interior environment. And bigger, more costly projects--high-efficiency furnaces, solar panels, and triple-pane windows, for example--often provide larger financial and environmental gains.

New homes

Newly constructed homes are being built to high standards that embrace green principles. Many builders now take a scientific, whole-building approach to ensure that a property's design, layout and systems work in concert to create a functional, comfortable setting that addresses environmental concerns.

Seeking green

When you're looking at a home with green features, here's a short checklist of considerations:

- Energy efficiency in home features like appliances, water faucets, lighting, heating, cooling and water-heating systems.
- Efficient building envelopes with high performance windows and well-insulated walls, floors, and attics.
- Non-toxic building materials and finishes, such as recycled or renewable woods and low-and zero-VOC (volatile organic compound) paints and sealants.
- A landscape featuring native plants that thrive without chemical fertilizers or excessive watering.
- Location efficiency, meaning a community where public transportation and the needs of daily life are accessible without a car.

Resources

- Contact a REALTOR® with NAR's Green Designation at GreenREsourceCouncil.org
- Read about green home labels at ENERGY STAR® at EnergyStar.gov
- Home Builders & Remodelers Association of MA at HBRAMA.com
- MA Green Building Council at usgbcma.org MassSave @ MassSave.com
- [Town webpage](#)

Contact Information

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