Why Build Green?

Buildings have a big impact on the environment. Over their life cycle, buildings account for 40% of US energy consumption, 25% of water use, and 30–40% of wood and materials use. Buildings also generate 20–30% of the solid waste stream and 25% of greenhouse gas emissions. Building just one 2,000 square foot house uses 1.5 acres of forest and can generate 13 tons of waste.

Our buildings also have a big impact on us; most of us spend more than 90% of our time indoors. Our indoor air is up to 10 times more polluted than outdoors due to inadequate ventilation and off-gassing of chemicals found in many building materials.

By addressing these issues when designing, constructing, and remodeling buildings, we can minimize a variety of environmental impacts, improve human health and productivity, and save money.

Resources

Visit our website to find Green Building Guidelines for New Home Construction and Remodeling projects, plus links to other Internet resources.

www.ccrecycle.org
www.cccounty.us/gbg

Take a virtual tour of our Green Building Materials Display which showcases samples of Green Building material products. Visit greenpointrated.com/products/ to search the on-line product directory.

GreenPoint Rated, a program of Build It Green, has a wealth of free Green Building information, including:
- online articles,
- case studies, and
- other resources for homeowners and building professionals in California. For details visit www.GreenPointRated.com

Find out how your home’s utility bills and energy & water efficiency compare to similar homes with GreenPoint Rated’s quick and easy Green Home Calculator at greenpointrated.com/calculator/
What Is Green Building?

Green Building is a holistic approach to building design and construction that enhances human and environmental health by conserving materials and energy and minimizing pollution. The following are examples of some products and materials used in Green Building:

- Cotton Insulation (recycled content material, good indoor air quality)
- Wood-framed Window with Low-E Glazing (energy efficient)
- Straw Board Cabinets (rapidly renewable material, good indoor air quality)
- Recycled Glass Countertop (recycled content material)
- Energy Star Refrigerator (energy efficient appliance)
- Forest Stewardship Certified Studs (sustainably harvested wood)
- Engineered L-Joints (efficient use of wood fiber, preserves old-growth forest)
- High Volume Fly Ash Concrete (recycled content material, durable)
- Bamboo Flooring (rapidly renewable material, good indoor air quality)
- Natural Linoleum Flooring (rapidly renewable material, durable)
- Dual Flush Toilet (water efficient fixture)
- Photovoltaic (Solar-Electric) System (renewable energy)
- Concrete Backfill (recycled content material)
- Solar Hot Water System (renewable energy)

Easy Steps to a Greener Home

1. Use fluorescent or compact fluorescent lighting (CFLs) indoors and outdoors.
2. Install high efficiency heating and cooling systems. Seal ducts tight with mastic rather than tape.
3. Install high quality insulation like cellulose or foam. Weatherstrip doors and windows.
4. Install water and energy-efficient appliances and plumbing fixtures. Repair water leaks immediately.
5. Install a roof radiant barrier and continuous ridge and soffit vents.
7. Take advantage of utility rebates. Have your home tested for energy efficiency.
8. Use high quality pleated media filters.
9. Measure and control indoor humidity.
10. Use paints and adhesives with minimal volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and use less toxic cleaning products.
11. Install hard floors like tile, natural linoleum, cork or stained concrete to reduce allergens.
12. Use durable roofing, siding, and deck materials.
13. Use local and recycled building materials.
15. Use mulch, swales and pervious paving to retain rainwater on your site.
16. Plant native and drought-tolerant plants and use efficient irrigation technology. Maintain good soil with compost and safer pest control methods.
17. Most importantly... Research and plan first to save headaches later. If you’re hiring a remodeling contractor, pick a qualified Green Building professional. The Green Resource Center is a good place to start.

Graphic courtesy of the Green Resource Center