



The home building industry coined the phrase 'green building' in the late 1980s, helping to turn a niche movement of resource-efficient homes into a quiet revolution – one that is increasingly becoming a preferred way to build and remodel.

Whether you're a home building professional looking to go green or a prospective green homebuyer, the reasons for going green are numerous.

Green building means incorporating environmental considerations and resource efficiency into every step of the home building and land development process to minimize environmental impact. It's a practical response to a variety of issues that affect all of us – like increasing energy prices, waning water resources, and changing weather patterns. It means making intentional decisions about:

- **Energy efficiency** improvements such as high levels of insulation, efficient HVAC systems, high-performance windows and energy-efficient appliances and lighting
- **Water conservation** measures such as water-efficient appliances and fixtures, filtration systems, and drought resistant or low-maintenance landscaping
- **Resource conservation** using materials and techniques such as engineered wood and wood alternatives, recycled building materials, sustainably harvested lumber, and more durable products
- **Indoor environmental quality** considerations such as effective HVAC equipment, formaldehyde-free finishes, low-allergen materials, and products with minimum off-gassing or low volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- **Site design** planning such as minimizing disruption and preserving open space
- **Homeowner education** through manuals and operating guides
- **Green business practices** that adopt ideas from other industries for saving resources and money in the home office

The first official green home building program began in 1991 in the city of Austin, Texas. The movement has grown slowly but surely since then and today, new homes are significantly more energy and resource efficient than they were even 20 years ago. A past survey of NAHB members showed that more than two-thirds are incorporating at least some of these green features into the homes they build -- and that as the home building industry begins to revive, it will be significantly greener. With the 2009 ANSI approval of the ICC 700 National Green Building Standard, builders, remodelers, and homebuyers now have a clear definition of green residential construction and a credible certification to that standard by a qualified third party.