



Green Housing Checklist



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This Green Home Checklist will help you make a more informed choice about your home. Review your home (since there's always room for improvement) or a home you are interested in with this checklist in hand.

The Right Site - A site with smart landscaping is important to help make your home comfortable, affordable and attractive.

- Water-efficient Bermuda or buffalo grass is planted in sunny areas.
- Plants, shrubs and trees that grow successfully in Central Texas are chosen. Use the City of Austin Preferred Plant List as a guideline.
- Gutters and downspouts direct water away from house. An irrigation system conserves water by using devices such as manual flow-control valves, a rain shut-off, and a timer with multiple start times.

The Right Design - Comfort and economy are possible when a house is designed for its site and climate.

Minimal Solar Heat Gain:

- Longest walls face north and south.
- Most windows face north and south.
- Most windows are shaded on the outside by overhangs, covered porches, awnings, trees, trellises, or pergolas.
- Garage & least-used rooms are positioned on west side as buffers from west sun.

Maximum Ventilation:

- Most windows are operable and positioned for cross breezes.
- Most rooms have windows on two walls.
- High, centrally-located, operable windows enable hot air to move up and vent.

The Right Exterior

Cool Shell and Attic:

- Light colored paint, siding, and roofing are used.
- A continuous vent strip runs underneath roof overhang to let air into the attic.
- Roof ridge has a continuous strip of venting or several passive vents close to the ridge.
- Attic insulation does not block air flow path between roof overhang vents and ridge vents.
- Attic has a radiant barrier below the roof decking or between the rafters (looks like aluminum foil). Radiant barrier is especially effective when duct work is in the attic.

Maximum Insulation:

- Insulation is at least 10 inches deep & evenly distributed. (Attic insulation is far more important in the Central Texas climate than wall insulation.)
- Wall insulation fills every space, such as wet-blown cellulose.

Maintenance:

- Exterior wall material is low maintenance (brick, stone, stucco, cement board).
- Decks are made of materials that have at least a 10-year life (not solid wood).
- Roof has forty-year life (metal or tile).

Optimal Windows:

- Unshaded windows have solar screens or low-e glass
- No skylights except solar tubes. (Solar tubes are okay.)
- Window frames are wood, vinyl or fiberglass.

The Right Interior - The right materials can improve indoor air quality & increase comfort. Choosing energy efficient appliances will save money.

Healthy Materials:

- Flooring is mostly hard surface, such as concrete, tile or wood.
- Other flooring materials are natural wool, jute, sea grass, cork or true linoleum.
- No vinyl wallpaper is used in the home.
- Bath has exhaust fan vented to outside.
- Cook top has exhaust fan vented to outside.
- Laundry/utility room has exhaust fan vented to outside.

Efficient Appliances and Lights:

- Water heating has a 10-year warranty.
- An Energy Guide Label that indicates the appliance is in the top 25% of the efficiency scale.
- Exterior lights have light and motion detectors to conserve energy.

Efficient Heating and Cooling

Effective Cooling Equipment:

- Ceiling fans in all major rooms. Home has a whole-house fan to exhaust heat.
- Home has a programmable thermostat.
- Home has an A/C with a cooling efficiency is 12.0 SEER or higher.
- Cooling system is "the right size" for the house. As a rule, if there are fewer than 600 sq. ft. of living space per ton of cooling, the unit is too big or the house is not designed for this climate. Ask a trained technician about a Manual J analysis, based on actual design and specifications.

Well-sealed Ducts:

- Ducts have been pressure-tested for leaks by a qualified technician. Remember, most houses lose about 25% of conditioned air due to leaky ducts. Leaks cause air quality and safety problems, too.
- With AC running, no cold air drafts at the duct joints and other connections.

Air Filters:

- The filter is accessible and easy to change.
- The system has a 6" wide filter cabinet with pleated-media or electronic filter.

The Right Economy

- Using local businesses and products keeps the local economy healthy, while reducing the affects of transportation on Austin's air quality.
- Regional materials such as mesquite, native cedar, pecan wood, local brick, limestone, and granite are used.
- Services of local artists and artisans are used for items such as cabinetry, wall murals, and decorative metal work.

The Right Lifestyle

- The right location of your home improves your quality of life.
- The home is conveniently located for activities such as work, school, entertainment, recreation, and public transportation.
- Traffic allows safe walking and biking.
- The home has a front porch big enough to use.

Contact your Alamo Title Sales Representative to get a copy of the Austin Energy Green Building 62 page Guide to the Single Family Home Rating.

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