

# EDMONTON'S GREEN HOME GUIDE



BUYING, SELLING OR RENOVATING A HOME?  
CHECK OUT THESE ENERGY-SAVING **GREEN** IDEAS.

Edmonton

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Canadian  
Home Builders'  
Association



***Edmonton Region***

**Edmonton**



**Congratulations.** The fact that you're about to buy a home, sell a home, or do some renovations means you're planning for the future. And the fact that you're about to explore Edmonton's Green Home Guide means you're thinking about Edmonton's environmental future as well.



# YOU'RE GONNA LOVE GREEN

Having a greener home ensures you and your family will live in a comfortable setting with lower utility bills. And research suggests that green homes, depending on their features, also increase in value at a greater rate than conventionally designed homes.

What's not to love about that!



## **DISCLAIMER:**

Construction based on the Green Home Guide does not ensure compliance with the regulations of either the Edmonton Zoning Bylaw or the Alberta Building Code. Any approvals or inspections provided by the City of Edmonton will be based solely on those regulations and will neither confirm nor refute the standards of this guide. Homeowners considering undertaking construction related to this Guide should contact Sustainable Development to ensure such compliance, and to obtain the necessary permits, inspections and approvals. For more information, please visit: [edmonton.ca/SustainableDevelopment](http://edmonton.ca/SustainableDevelopment).





# **A BIG STEP TOWARDS MINIMIZING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT**

Our homes have a significant impact on the city's long-term sustainability. By taking some simple, affordable steps to greening your next home purchase or renovation, you're helping to minimize Edmonton's environmental footprint, one house at a time.

*An overview of the:*

# **GREEN HOME GUIDE INFORMATION SECTIONS**

## **ALL THE ENERGY-SAVING DETAILS**

So what are the green features that a home should have? The Guide has the answers. Each information section is filled with the details you need, covering everything from location, home size and Canada's energy rating system, to the building envelope, ventilation information and home heating. You'll also learn about hot water heaters, green rating systems, high-efficiency appliances, water consumption, landscaping, healthy homes and environment, solar energy, plus other green innovations. There's even a handy glossary of terms.



*An overview of the:*

# **GREEN HOME GUIDE CHECKLISTS**

## **ESSENTIAL FOR HOME BUYERS AND CONDO BUYERS**

There's an easy-to-follow checklist for single-family home buyers that contains the important green questions you need to ask your builder, your real estate agent, or the home seller. If you're buying a condo, then the checklist for condo buyers is tailor-made for you. Please refer to the checklist of your choice to help you plan your energy-saving activities.

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**GREEN  
HOME GUIDE  
INFORMATION  
SECTIONS**

# 1 | LOCATION INFORMATION

## Take a Good Look at Your Location

Changing how you travel in the city and making travel choices that are sustainable – taking the bus, cycling, walking, carpooling – reduces Edmonton's greenhouse gas emissions and helps to mitigate climate change. So take a good look at your location, because it plays a big part in determining how reliant you are on your personal vehicle.

## A Walkable Location is a Healthy Choice

Whether you're buying a new or existing home, 800 metres (about 8 downtown blocks) is generally considered a walkable distance for most individuals. Housing that's located in a walkable neighbourhood near public transit, employment centres, schools and other amenities is often considered to be location efficient. And a walkable location promotes an active lifestyle, which contributes to better health.

## Every Home in Edmonton has a Walk Score. What's Yours?

Walk Score is a large-scale, publicly accessible walkability index that assigns a numerical walkability score for any address in Edmonton. To learn more, Please visit: [walkscore.com](https://www.walkscore.com)

And be sure to look for Walk Score on the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), as many listings are starting to include it.

## Taking Transit Reduces Transportation Costs

Being close to transit gives you the opportunity to cut down on the amount you drive, which helps reduce transportation costs.

## Increase Your Location Efficiency

**Here's something for home buyers to consider:** Depending on where you work and your lifestyle, purchasing a home in a mature area may increase your location efficiency. Household energy costs include your transportation, so improving your location efficiency can reduce your overall household bills. Also, purchasing a home in a mature area keeps Edmonton's existing neighbourhoods vibrant and sustainable into the future.





## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: LEVERAGING YOUR LOCATION



### Jobs

Living close to work is one of the greenest moves you can make. Your daily commute becomes low carbon, and the convenience, the health benefits and the time-saving advantages of not driving to and from work can all have a positive impact on your quality of life.



### Transit

Generally, a home is considered to have good access to transit if it's within a 5-minute walk of a regular city bus stop, and within a 10-minute walk of a rapid bus or rail. The primary goal with locating close to transit is that daily trips (such as commuting to work or school) are possible on transit.



### Amenities

Finding a home in a neighbourhood with convenient access to services, groceries, restaurants and shopping means you'll spend less time in your car.



### Parks and Green Space

Being able to quickly and easily get to a walking trail, a dog park, or sports field can have a positive impact on your family's lifestyle. In Edmonton, most homes are within a 5-minute walk from a green space.



### Walking Maps

Check out Edmonton's walking maps at: [edmonton.ca/walkmap](http://edmonton.ca/walkmap)

# 2 | HOME SIZE INFORMATION

## Reduce Energy Costs with the Right-Sized Home

Choosing a home size that meets but doesn't exceed your family's needs can save you money on your monthly heating and electricity bills.

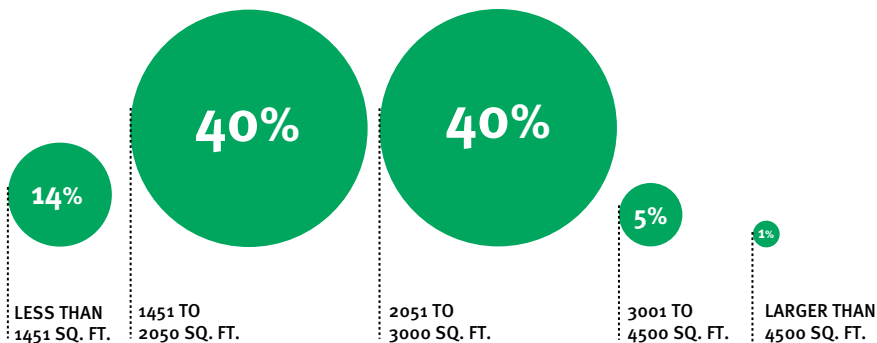
## Smaller Home Sizes Make a Big Difference for Edmonton's Future

As a rule, a smaller home uses less energy than a larger one of a similar age. Attached homes like duplexes, row houses and apartments use less energy on a square footage basis than single-detached homes. Whenever less energy is used in Edmonton, it helps us contribute to our goals of using less fossil fuel and reducing greenhouse gasses, which helps mitigate climate change.

## Home Size Quick Math: 500 Sq. Ft. per Person

Sometimes bigger isn't necessarily better. Look for a home that gives you the space you and your family need, but think twice about going too big. Depending on your family's needs, aim for 500 square feet per person. Look for homes that have an open plan or can be easily renovated to create an open plan in the main living areas. Open-plan homes feel more spacious even with a smaller total square footage.

## Size of Homes Being Built in Edmonton (2012)



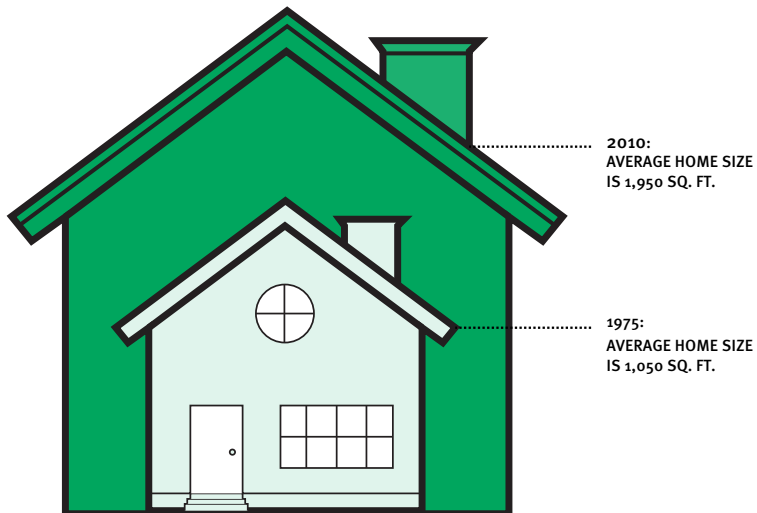
## Smaller Homes are Easier to Clean, Cheaper to Remodel

Small is beautiful. In addition to being more cost-effective and energy-efficient, a smaller home is also easier to clean and cheaper to remodel.

## Reduce Home Space: Put a Halt to Hallways

A quick way to determine if a home uses space well is to look at how much space is taken up by hallways. Open concepts that eliminate hallways can make a smaller house feel much bigger. Additional tips for loving smaller homes can be found at: [hgtv.com/topics/small-homes/index.html](http://hgtv.com/topics/small-homes/index.html)

## Size of Homes: Then and Now





# GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: AVERAGE HOME SIZES IN CANADA

The following are considered by LEED Canada for Homes to be average home sizes. A smaller-than-average home generally costs less to buy and less in monthly energy and maintenance costs.

DETACHED HOUSE SIZE	NUMBER OF BEDROOMS
98 sq. m (1,050 sq. ft.)	1
150 sq. m (1,600 sq. ft.)	2
200 sq. m (2,200 sq. ft.)	3
280 sq. m (3,000 sq. ft.)	4

Source: LEED Canada for Homes





# 3 | **ENERGUIDE RATING SYSTEM**

## **EnerGuide: Canada's Energy Rating and Labeling System**

EnerGuide is Canada's energy rating and labeling system that certifies the energy efficiency of products and homes (new and existing). The EnerGuide rating allows you to easily compare the advantages of an energy-efficient major household appliance (dishwasher, furnace, etc.) to see how it measures up against the range of products sold in Canada.

## **How Does Your Home's Energy Performance Stack Up?**

EnerGuide also provides a standard measure of your home's energy performance. The EnerGuide label shows you (and future buyers) exactly how energy-efficient your home is and allows you to compare the energy efficiency of your home with similar homes in your neighbourhood and across Canada. It's easy to understand and gives you comfort knowing that the home has been professionally assessed by a third party.

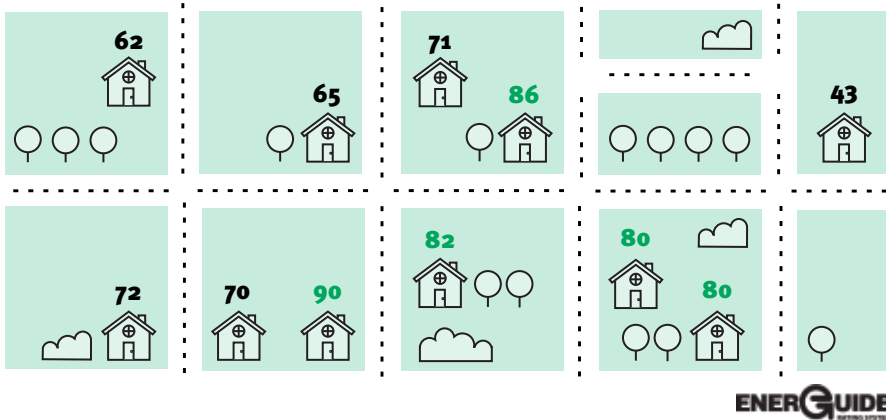
If you're planning to renovate or sell your home, the rating shows your home's present level of energy efficiency AND projects the level it could achieve with recommended upgrades.

## **Energy Ratings Help Edmonton Measure Environmental Progress**

The City of Edmonton actively encourages the use of EnerGuide as a way for everyone to engage in energy conservation. The EnerGuide rating also provides a basis for Natural Resources Canada (the federal agency that administers the EnerGuide for Homes program) to assess the carbon dioxide impacts of building. This in turn helps the City of Edmonton measure progress towards its climate change mitigation goals.

## For a New House, Look for an EnerGuide Rating of 80 or Higher

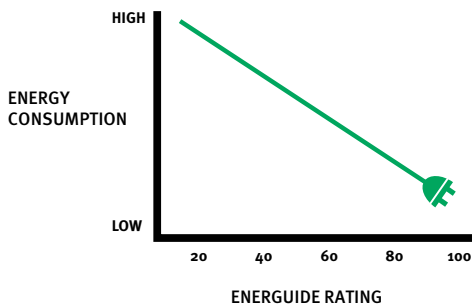
EnerGuide uses a score from 0 to 100, where 0 represents extremely poor energy efficiency, and 100 indicates such high energy efficiency that the home doesn't have to purchase energy. For a brand new house, look for a rating of 80 or higher.



Not all houses are created equal, and you can't tell the energy efficiency of a house just by looking at it. So be sure to ask for the EnerGuide rating of the home, as the rating can vary greatly even in homes built in the same neighborhood.

## Live Comfortable, Use Less Energy

- » Enjoy paying lower energy bills in your EnerGuide home
- » Feel good about how your purchase decisions are helping to reduce your carbon footprint
- » Enjoy living in a comfortable and efficient home



### Your EnerGuide Cost-Savings Chart

A typical new single-family house built to the minimum 2011 building code standard in Edmonton has an EnerGuide rating of about 71. However, the example below shows that achieving a higher energy standard can significantly reduce energy costs.

SIZE OF HOME	ANNUAL ENERGY COSTS AT ENERGUIDE 71	ANNUAL ENERGY COSTS AT ENERGUIDE 80	ENERGY SAVINGS	SAVINGS PERCENTAGE
1,500 sq. ft.	\$1,500	\$900	\$600	40%
2,500 sq. ft.	\$2,500	\$1,500	\$1,000	40%

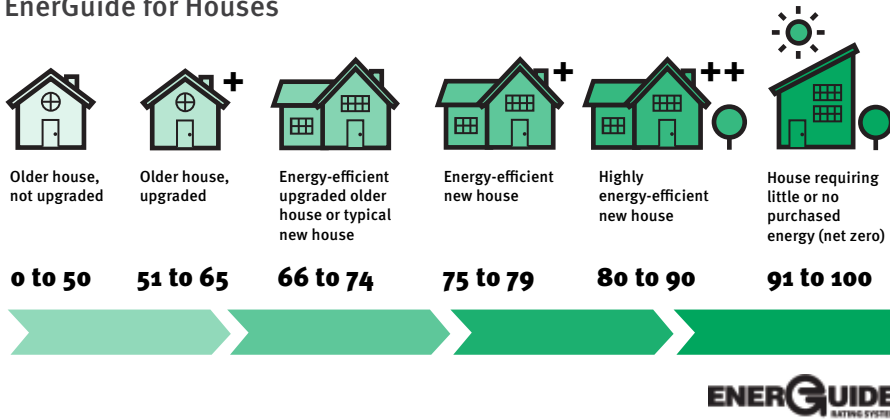
Source: City of Edmonton

### Improve Your Energy Rating 1 Point, Reduce Consumption up to 5%

According to Natural Resources Canada, a 1-point improvement on the EnerGuide rating scale typically reduces a home's energy consumption by about 3 to 5%. As the EnerGuide rating of a home goes up, the energy savings increase. Because the price of energy is expected to rise in the future, the financial benefits of saving energy should also rise over time.

It's important to note that the cost you pay for energy depends on many factors in addition to the design of your house. These include the choices made by occupants like turning off lights, taking shorter showers and turning down the thermostat.

## EnerGuide for Houses



## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: ENERGUIDE

### EnerGuide for Home Builders: Get the New Home Tested Prior to Occupancy

Builders can apply to have a newly built home tested and rated prior to occupancy.

### EnerGuide for Home Owners: Have a Qualified Advisor Conduct an Energy Evaluation

For existing homes, a qualified energy advisor conducts a walk-through of your home. The advisor collects data on your home's energy systems, house construction materials and the building envelope (the walls and roof of the home) to model the home's energy consumption. After performing a blower door test, the advisor uses energy analysis software called HOT2000 to compare your home with a reference house of a similar size in a similar climatic region. You'll receive a report with recommended renovations. Once upgrades have been made and a second evaluation completed, you'll receive an EnerGuide label.

### EnerGuide and Energy Advisors in Your Area

You can find more information about EnerGuide and locate energy advisors in your area at:  
[oee.nrcan.gc.ca/residential/personal/home-improvement/service/contact-advisors.cfm](http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/residential/personal/home-improvement/service/contact-advisors.cfm)



# 4 | BUILDING ENVELOPE

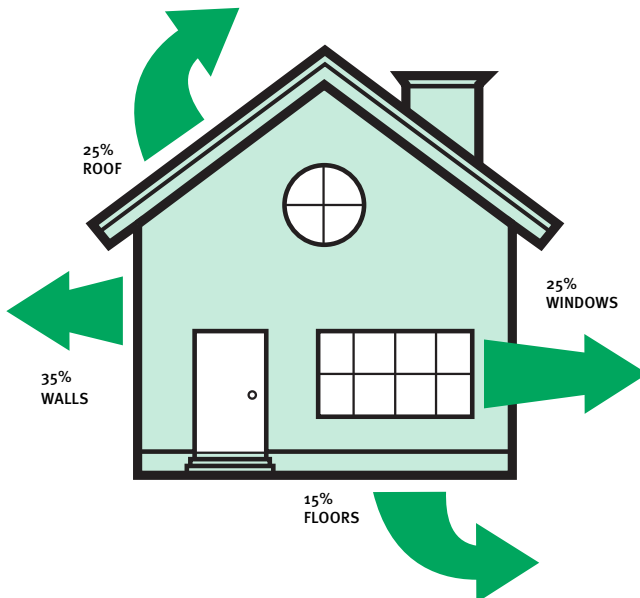
## The Building Envelope: Your Home's Magic Membrane

The building envelope is the physical separator – the walls, roof and foundation – between the inside and outside of the building. Just like the skin on your body, it serves a number of complex functions and interacts with all the various activities that go on in and around it.

The design, configuration and performance of the building envelope has a direct impact on your comfort, your home heating bills and your home maintenance costs. The cost to heat your home is affected by your home's overall surface-area-to-volume ratio, the number of projections such as balconies and dormers and the quality and design of the envelope itself.

The envelope is also the longest lasting and most difficult piece of a home to change, so it should be a top priority when building a home.

## Where Does the Heat Go?



## Efficient Envelopes Deliver Good News for Our Future

Ensuring that your home's envelope is air-tight and well-insulated improves the energy efficiency of your home. Whenever less energy is used in Edmonton, it helps us contribute to our goals of reduced fossil fuel use and greenhouse gases which helps to mitigate climate change.

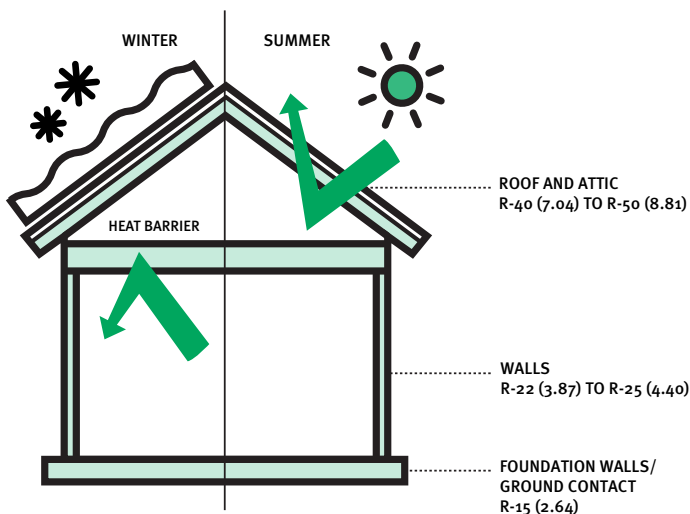
## Does Your Building Envelope Deliver Outstanding Energy Performance?

If you're looking to buy or renovate an existing home, an EnerGuide energy rating (ER) confirms the performance of the envelope and provides recommendations on where to make improvements. You can ask the seller if they've completed an EnerGuide test, or make it a condition of sale. Please refer to the **EnerGuide Rating System** section for more details, or visit the EnerGuide website at: [nrcan.gc.ca/energy/products/energuide/12523](https://nrcan.gc.ca/energy/products/energuide/12523)

## Insulation R-Value (or RSI)

Insulation effectiveness is measured using the R-value or RSI (please refer to the Glossary of Terms for more information). The Alberta Building Code specifies minimum insulation standards, but insulation levels that exceed the building code are recommended if you want to reduce your home's energy consumption and costs.

## An Energy-Efficient New Home (EnerGuide 80) Achieves the Following R-values (RSI):





## Window Location and Size

Windows and doors are generally the least thermally efficient areas of the building envelope, so the location and size of windows need to be carefully designed to maximize natural daylight and views while minimizing heat loss and ambient noise.

## Window Performance: What to Look for

A number of factors affect window performance. Ask your builder for the following technical details about the windows (as provided by the manufacturer):

- » **U-Value:** The amount of heat loss a window allows. The lower the value, the better the window performance. A double-paned, argon-filled low-E window has a U-value of 0.33.
- » **Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC):** The amount of heat from sunlight that passes through windows. In the Edmonton climate, generally a higher SHGC allows more solar heat to be captured, lowering energy consumption for heating. SHGC is expressed as a fraction of a number between 0 and 1. In the context of passive solar building design in Edmonton, the aim of the designer is normally to maximize solar gain within the building in the winter so a number closer to 1 is better. This of course means you will also maximize solar gain in the summer months. So combining this approach with shading strategies in the summer months (for example, a deciduous tree in front of a south-facing window) works to minimize winter heating bills and summer overheating.
- » **Energy Rating (ER):** The energy rating (ER) value is calculated using a formula that balances a product's U-value with its potential solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC) and its airtightness. The higher the number, the more energy-efficient the product. ER values normally range from 0 to 50, with an ENERGY STAR-qualified window in Edmonton's climate being 29.

Learn more about these ratings in the **Glossary of Terms**.





## Other Window Choices

Other window choices include the following:

- » Triple-pane windows are more energy-efficient than double-pane windows and can reduce outside noise, reduce temperature fluctuations and increase comfort near windows in the summer and winter.
- » Low-E glass coatings reflect both infrared and ultraviolet light. This helps to reduce heat transfer and prevent furnishings from fading.
- » Argon gas-filled panes are better insulated than those filled with air.

## An Energy-Efficient Building Envelope: Save up to 90% in Heating Costs

A well-insulated home with energy-efficient windows provides optimal comfort with no drafts or cold spots. An energy-efficient home is a “future-proofed” home, giving you peace of mind in a world of rising energy prices. Space heating is the single largest consumer of energy in your home, accounting for over 2/3 of the total annual energy consumption. A high-performance, efficient building envelope can save up to 90% of your home heating costs.

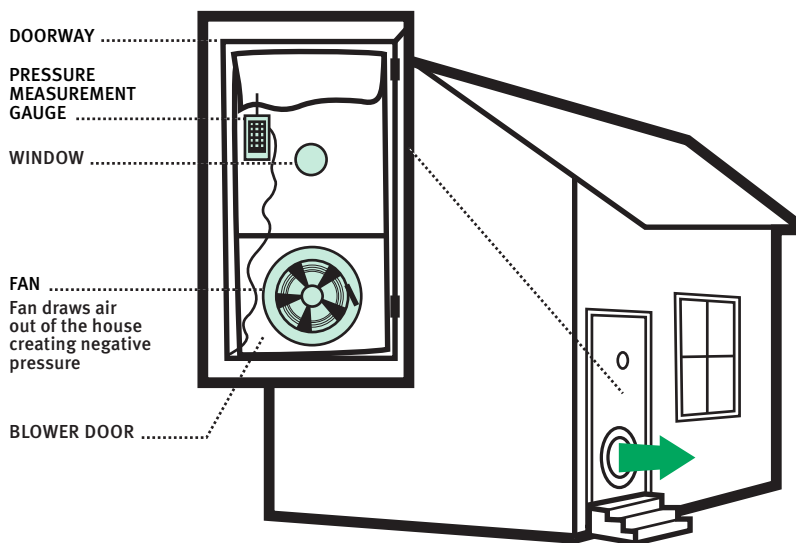


## The Blower Door Test Shows if Your House is Leaking Heat

With your EnerGuide test results, you receive a report that explains where the heat is being lost from your house. A blower door test is the only accurate way to measure air tightness; it shows how leaky your house is by measuring the number of air changes per hour (ACH) while pressurized.

A reading of 2.5 ACH is considered current good practice, whereas an R-2000 home will have a reading of 1.5 ACH and local net zero energy homes are achieving less than 0.5 ACH. Older homes can have readings over 10 ACH. That's like money flying right out the window!

## Blower Door Test: How it Works



## Building Envelope and EnerGuide Modelling

The EnerGuide analysis also includes evaluation and modelling at the planning stages of building a new home. This evaluation can help the builder maximize the home's energy efficiency.





## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: BUILDING ENVELOPE

### Insulation

Located inside the building envelope – the walls, roof and under the slab – insulation helps slow the transfer of heat through the building envelope. In practical terms, the insulation is primarily responsible for helping keep heat inside the home when it's cold outside and keeping it cool inside on warm days.

If you're looking to upgrade the insulation in an existing home, hiring a qualified professional to conduct a home energy audit is recommended. A home energy efficiency expert can test the levels of insulation and make suggestions on the type and amount of insulation needed.

Certain types of insulation are easier to retrofit than others. Types of insulation include blown-in cellulose for walls, sprayed foam, various types of batt and cellulose fibre. Seeking the advice of a qualified building envelope professional is strongly advised when you're planning to improve the insulation of your basement walls.

### Good Windows

Energy-efficient windows, doors or skylights, when combined with improved envelope insulation, can significantly reduce your home energy costs, while making your home quieter and more comfortable. Look for ENERGY STAR-qualified windows as an easy way to choose energy-efficient windows. For ENERGY STAR-rated windows, there are 4 climate zones in Canada (A, B, C and D), based on an average annual temperature indicator called a heating degree-day (HDD). Zone A is the mildest and Zone D is the coldest. ENERGY STAR Zone D-rated windows are more efficient than ENERGY STAR Zone C-rated windows (C is the minimum rating allowed in Edmonton for the window to meet the ENERGY STAR standard). Look for windows with the highest R-value.

### Ventilation

As homes become increasingly air-tight to reduce warm air escaping, the need to maintain sufficient fresh air becomes increasingly important. New homes built to EnerGuide 80 and above will usually have a heat recovery ventilator (HRV) that provides abundant fresh air into the home while minimizing heat loss. To learn more, please read the **Ventilation Information** section on the next page.

### Air Leaks

Airtightness (sealing) is critical to reducing leakage of air between indoors and out. In existing homes, caulking and weatherstripping are effective air-sealing techniques that offer quick returns on investment, often a year or less. Caulking is generally used for cracks and openings between stationary house components such as around door and window frames. Weatherstripping is used to seal components that move, such as doors and operable windows.



# 5 | VENTILATION INFORMATION

## **The Art of Ventilation: A Breath of Fresh Air**

On average, we spend about 90% of our time indoors, so we need an abundance of fresh air in our homes. That's why ventilation is so important. Ventilation helps control moisture, which minimizes mould growth and structural damage.

## **The Characteristics of a Well-Ventilated Home**

In naturally ventilated homes, look for windows that are strategically placed to encourage cross-ventilation so that during the times of the year when they're open, they can cool as much of the home as possible. Minimum building code requires exhaust fans in all bathrooms (preferably on timers) and in the kitchen, which should be used to prevent moisture buildup.

## **In New Homes, a Heat Recovery Ventilator (HRV) is Important**

An HRV is an air exchanger that delivers filtered, fresh outside air to living rooms and bedrooms and extracts stale air from high-moisture areas such as bathrooms, kitchens and laundries. It also saves energy by recovering 60 to 90% of the heat from the air that's being extracted.

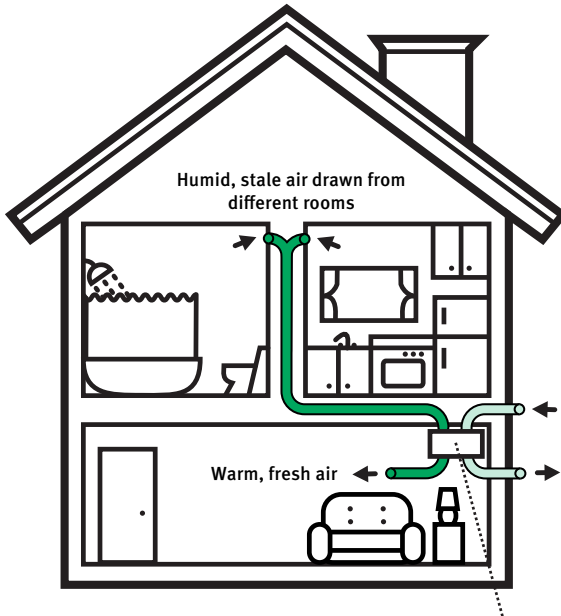
In any home, an HRV can provide healthy indoor air quality, with minimal energy consumption. However, you don't want to just ventilate the home—you also want to recover the exiting heat so it can be used to heat the incoming outdoor air. This is efficient and saves you money!



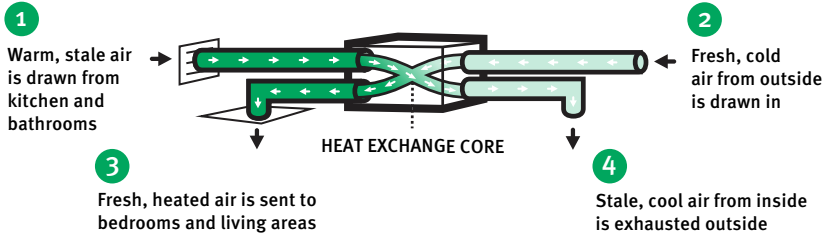
## **ALTERNATIVES TO HRVS**

The low-technology version of a mechanical ventilator in homes is the bathroom exhaust fan or kitchen exhaust fan. Switches and timers can be installed to turn the bathroom fans on for periods of time to increase ventilation. However, in general, these systems don't have heat recovery, so the energy-saving potential of an HRV isn't utilized.

## Heat Recovery Ventilator



### HEAT RECOVERY VENTILATOR: HOW IT WORKS



## Improve Your Indoor Air Quality, Reduce Your Heating Costs

An HRV improves your indoor air quality, helps overcome moisture-related health and structural problems and reduces heating costs. An HRV can also reduce household odours, as fresh air is constantly being provided to the home.

## HRV Home System Helps People with Respiratory Sensitivity

Did you know that according to the Canadian Lung Association, over 30% of Canadians suffer from some sort of respiratory sensitivity? Homes can be designed with these Canadians in mind. According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), homes equipped with hard-surfaced flooring (no carpets) and HRVs are the best choice. Learn more by reading the CMHC – Research House for the Environmentally Hypersensitive PDF, available at: [cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/bude/heho/upload/Research-House-for-the-Environmentally-Hypersensitive.pdf](http://cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/bude/heho/upload/Research-House-for-the-Environmentally-Hypersensitive.pdf)



## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: HEAT RECOVERY VENTILATORS (HRVS)

### What Types of Homes Are Best for HRVs?

Heat recovery ventilators (HRVs) can be used in all building types, small and large. In larger condominium complexes, ventilation systems with heat recovery can be centralized for the whole building. HRVs can be retrofitted into existing homes to improve air quality and save energy. It particularly makes sense to install HRVs in homes that have undergone energy efficiency retrofits and obtained an EnerGuide rating of 78 or above.

### HRV Maintenance

HRVs require routine maintenance and periodic adjustment. If the home you're interested in has an HRV, ask when it was last serviced or adjusted. Poorly maintained HRVs can cause imbalances where the house can become over-ventilated or under-ventilated. Some HRVs are completely separate of other systems in the house, while others are connected to a forced-air furnace system.





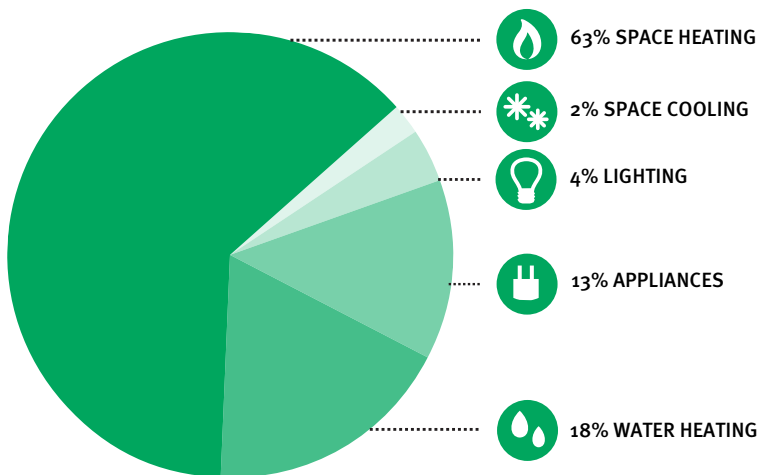


# 6 | HOME HEATING

## The Heating System: Your Home's Biggest Energy User

Your home heating system is the biggest energy user in the home. On average, home heating accounts for about 2/3 of your home's energy use, so making the right choice is important.

### Canada's Average Home Energy Usage (2007)



Source: NRCAN

## Natural Gas Usage per Year for Edmonton Single-Family Home

The average single-family home in Edmonton uses about 160 gigajoules (GJ) of natural gas per year (about \$600 to \$750 at 2013 rates, not including fixed charges), which produces about 7.9 tonnes of greenhouse gas (GHG).

While a variety of home heating systems are available, a gas-fired heating appliance is the most typical in Edmonton. Alternatives to gas are generally electricity based, including air source and ground source (geothermal, geoexchange) heat pump systems that indirectly create GHG emissions because most of Edmonton's electricity comes from burning coal.





## Gas-Fired Furnaces

Most homes in Edmonton are heated using a forced-air furnace in which natural gas combustion heats the air, which is then blown by a fan to living spaces through a network of ducts and vents.

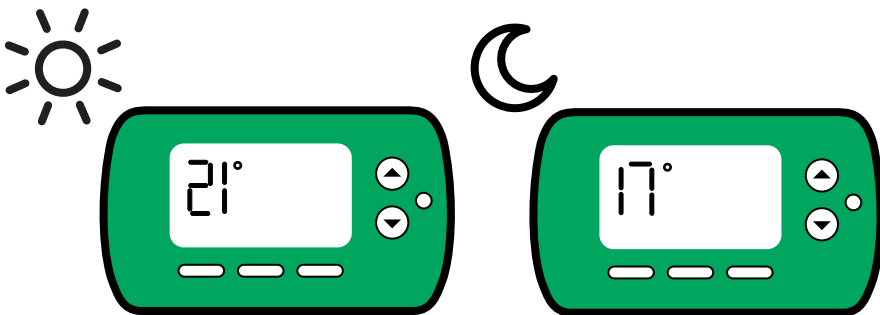
For all gas-heating appliances, look for the EnerGuide or ENERGY STAR label (or both) to determine the energy efficiency of the appliance. Efficiency is measured by annual fuel utilization efficiency (AFUE). An AFUE of 90% means that 90% of the energy in the fuel becomes heat for the home, and the other 10% escapes up the chimney and elsewhere. Look for an efficiency above 95% as best practice. AFUE doesn't include heat losses from the duct system or piping, which can be as much as 35% of the appliance output energy when ducts are located in the attic, so ensuring they are sealed is important.

## Condensing Furnaces and Boilers

A condensing furnace or boiler condenses the water vapour produced in the combustion process and uses the heat from this condensation. All new furnaces have an AFUE of 90%, but a lot of old ones are still in operation. A new furnace costs about \$4,000, but in an average home this cost can be fully recouped in energy savings in less than 10 years.

## High-Efficiency Furnace + Programmable Thermostat = Savings

Enjoy the warm feeling you get knowing that your heating system is keeping your home comfortable, saving you money and reducing your carbon footprint. Combining a high-efficiency furnace with a programmable thermostat that sets the temperature each night to decrease from 21 to 17 C can reduce yearly natural gas costs by 10 to 20%.



## Don't Wait to Replace your Furnace

A high-efficiency furnace has an annual fuel utilization efficiency (AFUE) rating of 90 to 98%. This means that a furnace at the high end of this range will convert 98% of the combusted natural gas to usable energy, with the remaining 3% exhausted to the outside. By comparison, many older furnaces have an AFUE of only about 60%, meaning 40% of the fuel is wasted. So replacing your furnace starts to save you money right away!



Look for this symbol when you're shopping for new appliances or buying a new home.

## ENERGY STAR

ENERGY STAR is the international symbol of premium energy efficiency. Products that display the ENERGY STAR symbol have been tested according to prescribed procedures and have been found to meet or exceed higher energy efficiency levels without compromising performance.

The ENERGY STAR website, operated by Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency, lists all the different appliances and products that have the ENERGY STAR qualification. The site also highlights the most efficient products in a variety of different categories. You'll be surprised at the range of products there are for homes. To learn more, please visit: [oee.nrcan.gc.ca/residential/10759](http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/residential/10759)





## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: HOME HEATING

### Programmable Thermostats

Programmable thermostats allow you to program your furnace to different temperature settings at different times of the day and week to maximize energy savings without compromising your comfort. You can buy a simple ENERGY STAR-rated mercury-free programmable thermostat for about \$30 to \$80.

### Are There Other Types of Heating Systems?

Yes. The most common alternative to a gas furnace is a gas boiler connected to a radiant heating system. Radiant heating systems are more comfortable and energy efficient than forced (moving) air systems, because they heat the home without excess air movement. A form of radiant heating that is becoming more common is underfloor heating. Radiant heating systems are also healthier than forced air systems, as there is minimal air re-circulation, which minimizes exposure to dust, pollen and other pollutants found in a home. The drawback of radiant heating systems are that they are more costly than forced air systems.

Alternatives to gas heating systems can include electricity based resistance heating as well as air-source and ground source (geothermal) heat pump systems. Heat pump systems move thermal energy (heat) from one area to another and have the advantage of providing both heating and cooling within one system. For additional details regarding these technologies, please read the **Other Green Innovations** section.



# 7 | HOT WATER HEATERS

## Water Heating: Your Second-Biggest Energy User

On average, water heating uses about 20% of the total energy consumed in a home and is the second-largest energy user after space heating. It's one of the most straightforward pieces of equipment to upgrade and also provides a good opportunity for energy savings.

## Factor in the Energy Factor (EF)

Several different types of water heaters are available, and prices and energy efficiency vary. The best measure of water-heater efficiency is the energy factor (EF), which compares the energy supplied in heated water to the total daily energy consumption of the water heater. An EF of 0.67 or higher is considered the benchmark to be looking for.

## Natural Gas Storage Water Heaters

These types of water heaters are the most common in Edmonton. Their cylindrical tanks offer a ready reservoir (storage tank) of hot water. Since water is constantly heated in the tank, energy can be wasted when the tank isn't in use. (This is called standby heat loss.) Therefore, it's important to select the right size of tank. According to Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency, a single family with 4 family members, 2 bathrooms, a dishwasher and a clothes washer requires a 180-litre (40 gallon) tank.

## Extra Water Tank Insulation = Extra Savings

Some storage water heater models have a heavily insulated tank, which significantly reduces standby heat losses and lowers annual operating costs. Look for models with tanks that have a thermal resistance (R-value) of R-12 to R-25. A high R-value increases the energy factor of the water heater. Look for ENERGY STAR-rated high-efficiency hot water tanks. Gas water heaters also have venting-related energy losses. Either a fan-assisted gas water heater or an atmospheric-sealed combustion water heater reduces these losses.



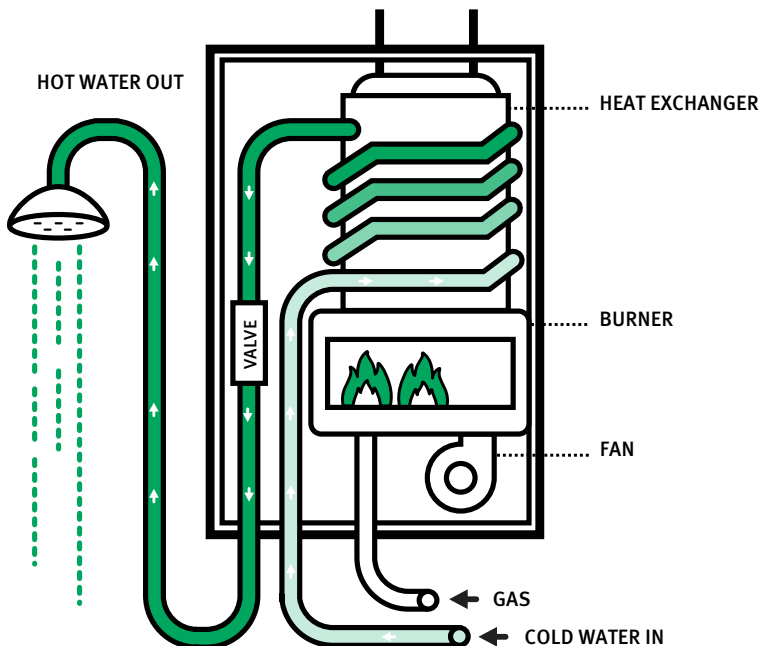
## Tankless Water Heaters: Energy Efficiency's in the House

Tankless water heaters, also known as on-demand or instantaneous water heaters, provide hot water only as it's needed. Since they don't produce the standby energy losses associated with storage water heaters, they can save you money. They're also mounted on the wall so they save on floor space as well.

Tankless water heaters typically provide hot water at a rate of 8 to 15 litres (2 to 5 US gallons) per minute. Gas-fired tankless water heaters produce higher flow rates than electric ones and are generally cheaper to operate. However, while running, on-demand gas water heaters use more gas than a regular hot water storage tank and may require a larger gas supply line. Similarly, electric on-demand heaters require significantly larger electrical draw than storage tanks and may be restricted by the home's electrical service size.

On-demand water heaters can be up to 34% more energy-efficient than conventional storage-tank water heaters. The greatest potential improvements are in homes that use the least hot water, such as small dwellings, households using hot water only a few times in the day and places with very efficient fixtures. You can achieve even greater energy savings (of up to 50%!) by installing an on-demand water heater at each hot water outlet, but it can be very cost prohibitive.

## Tankless Water Heater: How it Works



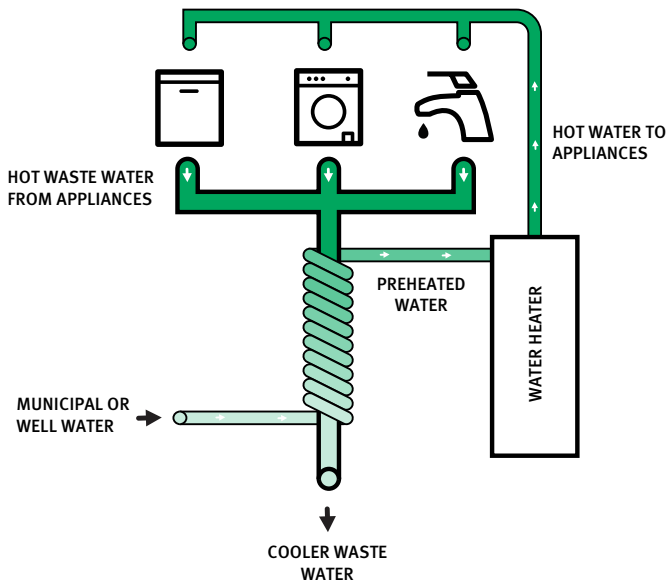
## Lower Your Energy Costs with a Tankless Hot Water Heater

The initial cost of a tankless water heater is higher than that of a conventional storage water heater, but wall-mounted tankless water heaters take up much less space, typically last longer and have lower energy costs, which could offset the higher purchase price.

## Drain-Water Heat Recovery

Drain-water heat recovery and drain-line heat exchangers: These systems are essentially a coil that goes around the drain line (coming from hot water sources like sinks, showers, bathtubs, dishwashers and clothes washers) that capture up to 60% of the waste heat passing through the drains.

The heat that's recovered is returned to the system which lessens the amount of energy required to heat additional hot water. These systems have no moving parts, so nothing can wear out or get clogged. Only fresh water goes through the pipes; hair and other materials go through a separate pipe. The systems cost about \$500 to \$800, including installation and can be one of the most cost-effective energy efficiency improvements in a home.





## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: HOT WATER HEATERS

### Preventing Legionella Bacteria

It's important to set your hot water heater to between 50 and 55 C. This keeps energy costs low, but the temperature is high enough to prevent the growth of Legionella bacteria.

To learn more, please visit the Health Canada website at: [phac-aspc.gc.ca/id-mi/legionella-eng.php](http://phac-aspc.gc.ca/id-mi/legionella-eng.php)

#### Excessive Water Temperature

Water that's too hot is not only more expensive but can also be dangerous for your family.

### Tankless Water Heaters Last Longer

Most tankless water heaters have a life expectancy of more than 20 years. They also have easily replaceable parts that extend their life by many more years. In contrast, storage-tank water heaters last 10 to 15 years.

### Have Your On-Demand Water Heater Installed by a Pro

It's important to ensure that on-demand water heaters are installed by qualified contractors and are properly vented. The condensing models require access to a drain.



# 8 | GREEN RATING SYSTEMS

## Green Building Certification

A green building certification provides assurance that the home's green claims have been verified.

## Get to Know the Green Rating Systems

Green rating systems play an important role in promoting green homes. There are some – like EnerGuide and Passive House – that focus on energy performance. Others such as R-2000, BUILT GREEN® and LEED consider a wider set of green criteria important to Edmontonians, such as indoor health and local materials.



## Green Certification Can Increase Resale Value of a Building

According to a study by the UCLA Institute for the Environment and Sustainability, green certification can add an average of 9% to the resale value of buildings. To learn more, visit: [issuu.com/nilskok/docs/kk\\_green\\_homes\\_071912/1](https://issuu.com/nilskok/docs/kk_green_homes_071912/1)







## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: ENERGY RATING SYSTEMS

### BUILT GREEN

BUILT GREEN® is a popular green building rating system that applies to houses, row houses, condominiums and multi-storey residential towers. It includes an energy requirement (EnerGuide label) as well as categories including materials and methods, indoor air quality, ventilation, waste management, water conservation and building practices. This certification includes the EnerGuide label and a BUILT GREEN seal. For more information please visit: [builtgreencanada.ca](http://builtgreencanada.ca)

### LEED

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a green building rating system that provides a rating (certified silver, gold, or platinum) of the building's overall performance. For more information, please visit: [cagbc.org/homes](http://cagbc.org/homes)

### Passive House

Passive House is a rigorous certification system with the goal of producing homes that use almost no energy. Passive Houses must meet very stringent requirements regarding both their design and construction. To learn more, please visit: [passivehouse.ca](http://passivehouse.ca)

### R-2000

R-2000 includes requirements related to energy efficiency, indoor air quality and the use of environmentally responsible products and materials. For more details, please visit: [oee.nrcan.gc.ca/residential/new-homes/r-2000/7334](http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/residential/new-homes/r-2000/7334)

### ENERGY STAR for New Homes

The ENERGY STAR® for New Homes initiative promotes energy efficiency guidelines that enable new homes to be more energy-efficient than those built to minimum provincial building codes. Home builders must be licensed for ENERGY STAR for New Homes. To learn more, please visit: [nrcan.gc.ca/energy/efficiency/housing/new-homes/5057](http://nrcan.gc.ca/energy/efficiency/housing/new-homes/5057)



# 9 | HIGH-EFFICIENCY APPLIANCES

## Your Kitchen: The Source for up to 40% of Your Energy Bill

The average kitchen accounts for 20 to 40% of a home's total energy bill. If your refrigerator and dishwasher are more than 10 years old, you can most likely reduce your utility bills by replacing these appliances with high-efficiency models. There's an initial investment to upgrade old appliances, but chances are you'll appreciate the superior performance and lower utility bills. Be sure to dispose of your old appliances properly at your local Eco Station. Learn more at: [edmonton.ca/ecostations](http://edmonton.ca/ecostations)

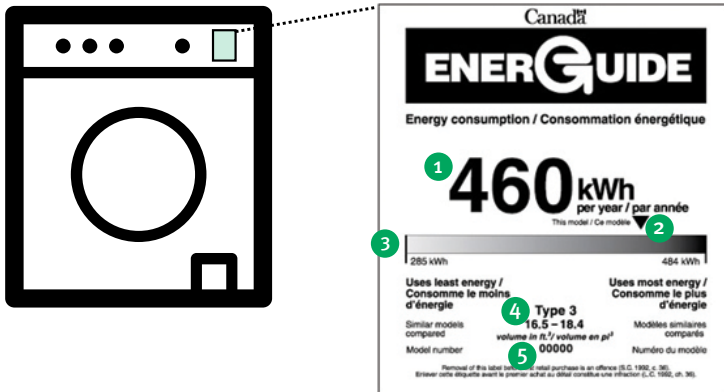
## Energy-Efficient Appliances have the ENERGY STAR Label

- » An ENERGY STAR label means that a product meets stringent energy requirements.
- » Ovens and ranges aren't included in the ENERGY STAR program, given the inherent inefficiency of these appliances. It's estimated that only 6% of the energy used to power an oven is absorbed by the food!
- » To find the most energy-efficient electric appliances, look for the ENERGY STAR label at your retailer. More ENERGY STAR information is available from Natural Resources Canada at: [nrcan.gc.ca/energy/products/energystar/why-buy/13631](http://nrcan.gc.ca/energy/products/energystar/why-buy/13631)



## Compare the EnerGuide Labels

Federal law requires that the EnerGuide label be placed on all new electrical appliances manufactured in or imported into Canada, and that the label indicate the amount of electricity used by that appliance. Although the EnerGuide label shows the energy efficiency of the appliance relative to similar models, you can easily compare EnerGuide ratings between competing appliances. The rating is the total annual energy the appliance will consume yearly under average operation.



- 1** Average annual energy consumption of the appliance in kilowatt hours (kWh)
- 2** Energy efficiency of the appliance relative to similar models
- 3** Annual energy consumption range for models of this type and size
- 4** Type and size of the model
- 5** Model Number

## Quick Math: Calculate Operation Cost of Energy-Efficient Appliances

Surprisingly, energy-efficient appliances aren't much more expensive than regular appliances. When you add up your monthly energy savings, you may find that you can pay back the extra amount you paid for your energy-efficient appliance in less than 1 year. To determine how much your energy-efficient appliance costs to operate, multiply the annual kilowatt hours (kWh) on the EnerGuide label by \$0.10.





## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: APPLIANCE EFFICIENCY

To maximize your savings, select the appliance size that best suits your needs.

### Dishwashers

80% of the energy used by a dishwasher goes towards water heating; the rest runs the motor and the fan.

Compact dishwashers use less water and energy per wash, but if you have to use it more than once a day, it's likely more efficient to use a standard size.

Dishwashers and refrigerators operate most efficiently when they're full. The dishwasher uses the same amount of water whether half full or completely full, and more items in a fridge help to keep the internal temperature cool.

Don't position your dishwasher next to the refrigerator. The heat produced by the dishwasher causes your refrigerator to work harder.

### Refrigerators

The style of refrigerator can affect energy use. In general, models with the freezer on the top or bottom use up to 25% less energy than comparable side-by-side refrigerator/freezer models. Remember, if you buy a new fridge and you keep using your old one as a second refrigerator in the basement or garage, you will not see these energy savings!

### Oven Ranges and Hoods

The most energy efficient cooking system is an induction range, which heats only the pot, combined with a recirculating, or ductless, range hood and an HRV exhaust intake in the kitchen that handles the smoke and odours.

### Clothes Dryers

Clothes dryers use a lot of energy so the opportunity for energy savings is large. A typical system simply directs the air outside via the dryer exhaust. New technology includes condensing dryers and heat pump dryers.

A condensing dryer recovers much of the waste energy from the hot, humid air, drains the excess moisture away and funnels the remaining exhaust air into an adjacent space where it can offset heating energy for most of the year in our climate.

A heat pump dryer does not require a vent; instead, the pump reuses the heated air and through condensation, funnels the moisture into a drain or collection tank. This system offers more than double the energy efficiency compared to a conventional electric dryer.





# 10 | WATER CONSUMPTION

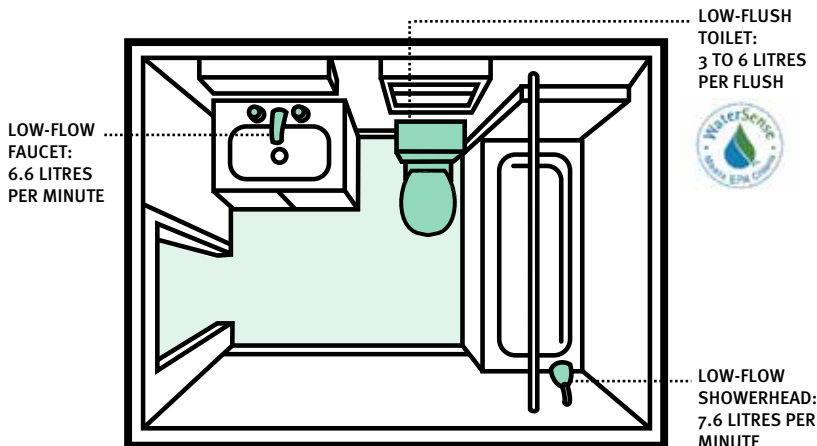
## Water Conservation = Cost Conservation

Simple, low-cost water conserving fixtures can reduce your water consumption and water bills significantly. They also reduce your energy costs by lowering the amount of water that needs to be heated. By switching to energy-efficient and water-wise low-flow fixtures and appliances, the average Edmonton homeowner could save over \$300 a year. Learn more at: [epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/inside-your-home/Pages/inside.aspx](http://epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/inside-your-home/Pages/inside.aspx)

## Efficient Fixtures Make for Effective Future

In 2008, the City adopted a Water Efficient Fixtures Bylaw, requiring that all new homes and permitted residential renovations be installed with low-flush toilets (maximum 6 litres per flush), low-flow showerheads (maximum 9.5 litres per minute) and low-flow faucets (maximum 8.3 litres per minute). Reducing water consumption is a good practice that lessens the pressures on the North Saskatchewan River. Also, water treatment requires energy and produces greenhouse gases, so reducing water usage contributes to climate change mitigation.

## Be Water-Wise: What to Look for in Household Products



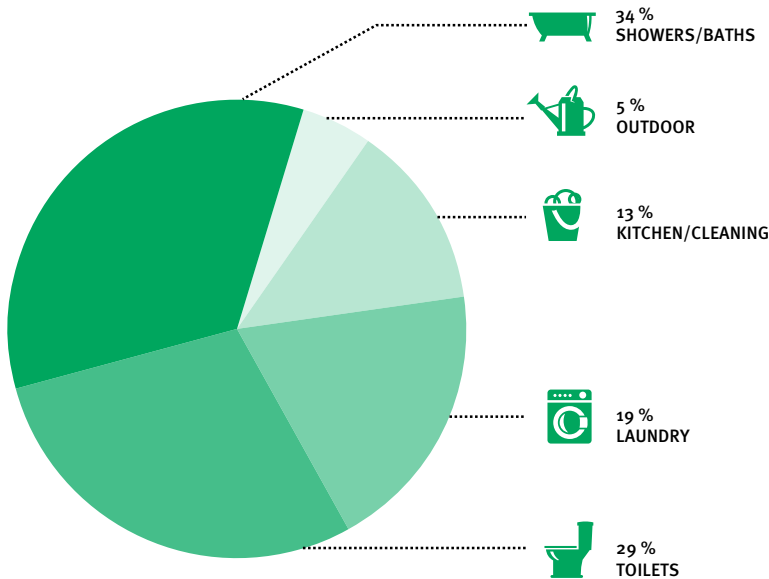


WaterSense is a labeling program that aims to decrease indoor and outdoor water use through water-efficient products and simple water-saving practices. Look for the WaterSense label to find products which have been independently certified by a third-party licensed body to save water without sacrificing performance or quality.

## Edmonton Water Usage: The Numbers

An average single-family Edmonton household has 2.4 people, consumes 18.5 cubic metres (18,500 litres) per month, uses 230 litres per person per day for indoor and outdoor use and pays about \$26 per month for water, not including fixed fees or sewage charges. (Source: EPCOR.) And contrary to what some believe, the performance of low-flow fixtures can be just as high as less water-efficient fixtures. (So you won't have to run around in the shower to get wet!) The average family can save about \$89 and reduce personal greenhouse gas emissions by 56 kilograms per year by using low-flush toilets, low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators.

## Edmonton Water Consumption



## MORE WATER CONSERVATION TIPS AT EPCOR

EPCOR provides great tips on how to reduce your water use and save money at: [epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/Pages/efficiency-conservation.aspx?cid=1](http://epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/Pages/efficiency-conservation.aspx?cid=1)





## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: WATER CONSERVATION

### Toilets

Older-model toilets use 20 litres per flush. Replacing your existing toilet with a new low-flush toilet reduces water use between 30% (down from 13 litres to 4.8 litres) and 75% (down from 20 litres to 4.8 litres) per flush, depending on your existing unit. Dual-flush toilets (3 and 6 litres per flush) are even more efficient.

### Low-Flow Showerheads and Faucets

Low-flow showerheads (7.6 litres per minute) and bathroom faucets (6.6 litres per minute) are commonly available, can be comparable in cost and can reduce demand between 15 to 20% more than standard fixtures.

### Faucet Aerators

Using faucet aerators on old, inefficient faucets can save up to 40% of the water used for hand washing. Leaky faucets can waste up to 13,000 litres of water per year per household.

### Kitchen Fixtures and Appliances

As in the bathroom, low-flow faucets can be used in the kitchen. ENERGY STAR dishwashers are at least 25% more water efficient than standard dishwashers and can save up to 20% on water heating costs by heating incoming water. To reduce energy consumption, don't use the heat-dry setting.

### Kitchen Garburator

Try to avoid using a kitchen garburator, since it consumes energy and water every time you flip the switch. Putting food waste down the sink increases the load on city sewage systems and treatment plants. When you put your waste in the garbage, it makes its way to Edmonton's waste management facility, where food scraps are properly managed at the compost facility. Better still, you could build or buy a backyard composter to deal with your food waste.

### Washing Machines

ENERGY STAR high-efficiency (HE) clothes washers use 60% less energy and 35 to 45% less water than regular clothes washers. These washers extract more water from clothes during the spin cycle, reducing drying time, which saves energy and wear and tear on your clothes. In addition, most use a smaller amount of detergent than older models of top-loading machines, saving you even more. Additional tips for a more efficient laundry room include washing in cold water, conducting routine maintenance on your machines and using clotheslines and drying racks. See the **High-Efficiency Appliances** section for more details.







# 11 | LANDSCAPING AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

## **Eco-Landscaping Makes Sense**

Eco-friendly landscaping offers a wide range of landscape design possibilities that can help your home look great while minimizing chemical fertilizers, reducing water consumption and saving money.

## **Reducing Lawn and Garden Irrigation Reduces Costs**

A cornerstone of eco-landscaping is reduced water use. This is because pumping water from its natural source, treating it so it's safe to drink and moving it to your tap uses a lot of energy. By reducing the amount of water you use to irrigate your lawn and gardens, you help lower the energy use and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions responsible for climate change.

## **Green Space Reduces Water Flow and Storm Sewer Demand**

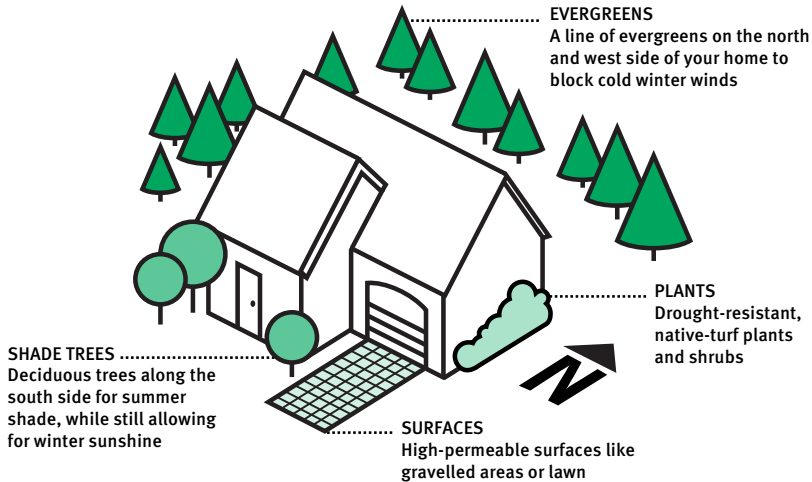
Eco-landscaping serves other sustainability objectives as well. Lawns and gardens provide green space and help increase infiltration and decrease the flow of water off your lot. This in turn reduces the demands on the storm sewer system as less water reaches the catch basins. This also decreases contaminants entering the North Saskatchewan River and can help to reduce the overall volume of water needing to be treated by the sewage treatment centre (in areas of the city that have combined sewer systems).

## **Enhance Your Property Value by Being Energy Wise**

Eco-landscaping approaches to your home's lawn and garden reduce energy use while improving the aesthetic and property value of your home.



## Eco-Friendly Landscaping: What to Look for



## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

### Lawns

Lawns only need 2.5 centimetres (1 inch) of water per week to stay nice and green. Keep track of how much water your lawn is getting by setting out an empty tin such as a tuna can to collect rainwater and irrigation. There's no need to water your lawn after the water in the tin reaches a depth of 2.5 centimetres (1 inch). Learn more at: [epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/outside-your-home/Pages/lawn.aspx](http://epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/outside-your-home/Pages/lawn.aspx)

### Native Plants

Plants native to the Edmonton region are a gardener's best friend because they thrive in our local climate. They're relatively unaffected by drought, wind, extremes in temperature and the unpredictable early and late frosts of our short prairie growing season.

For more information on types of native plants suitable for landscaping, visit:

[epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/outside-your-home/Pages/garden.aspx](http://epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/outside-your-home/Pages/garden.aspx)

### Trees

A well-placed line of evergreens on the north and west side of your home provides shelter against winter winds and reduces your home's demand for heat. Deciduous trees (trees that lose their leaves in the winter) on the south side of your house provide shade in the summer and sunshine during the winter.



## Soil, Mulch and Compost

Adequate soil depth and quality plays an important role in storing and retaining water and nutrients for vigorous growth. Provide a minimum of 15 centimetres (6 inches) for lawn areas and 30 to 45 centimetres (12 to 18 inches) for shrubs. Soil should be good quality, contain organic material such as compost and drain well. A sandy loam that feels soft and crumbles easily is the optimum texture. Cover the soil surface around your outdoor plants with compost, shredded bark, or other organic material to help maintain moisture.

Mulching in the spring reduces weeds and the need to water. Mulching in the fall protects plants against winter. Mulch also creates a habitat for beneficial insects, reducing the reliance on pesticides.

Using a backyard composting bin means you can make your own natural fertilizer and soil conditioner by composting yard waste and kitchen scraps (for example, eggshells, cores, and peels).

## Efficient Irrigation

More than half of the water applied to lawns can be lost to evaporation and runoff due to overwatering. If you're looking at a home that has an irrigation system, check to see if it uses drip or low-volume nozzles wherever possible, as these reduce water flow rates. Automatic shut-off devices, or irrigation timers and controllers can further optimize irrigation and reduce wastage.

## Rainwater Collection

A cistern or rain barrel to capture and store rainwater for irrigation reduces runoff and the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with tap water. The water can be used to irrigate the garden (instead of using tap water) and is healthier for the plants (which saves you money by reducing your water bill).

## Rain Gardens

Rain gardens are stormwater management landscaping features to look for. They're characterized by a vegetated, shallow depression with permeable topsoil. Rain gardens provide water quality treatment, reduce runoff and allow for infiltration near where runoff originates, such as roofs, driveways and sidewalks.

## More Information on Conservation and Landscaping

EPCOR provides great efficiency and conservation tips for your yard at: [epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/outside-your-home/Pages/outside.aspx](http://epcor.com/efficiency-conservation/outside-your-home/Pages/outside.aspx)

Also, see the City of Edmonton's Low Impact Development – Best Management Practices Design Guide PDF for ideas on landscaping features such as rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavement and box planters: [edmonton.ca/city\\_government/documents/PDF/LIDGuide.pdf](http://edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/LIDGuide.pdf)







# 12 | HEALTHY HOMES AND ENVIRONMENT

## Healthy Indoor Spaces are Important for Edmontonians

Edmontonians spend a great deal of time indoors, particularly in winter, so it's important to make our indoor spaces as healthy as possible.

## Smart Product Choices Reduce Environmental Impacts

Using local, recycled and non-toxic products and materials can reduce environmental impacts of transportation, material harvesting and processing and toxic environmental emissions. That's better for the environment and better for you.

## What Makes a Home Healthy? Here's What to Look for:

- » When looking at a home on the resale market, be aware that depending on the age of the home, some potentially toxic compounds may have been used in its construction like lead paint, asbestos and urea formaldehyde foam insulation. It can be difficult to identify the presence of these substances without hiring an expert. If it's known by the seller, it must be disclosed at the time of sale.
- » For new homes, look for low-VOC paints, adhesives and flooring (Green Seal, Green Label, or equivalent labels). Also look for rapidly renewable or recycled materials like bamboo flooring or recycled glass tile. Ask if the wood (including bamboo) is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which means it comes from sustainably managed forests.
- » A healthier home uses low-VOC paints, glues and flooring materials, with ecolabels such as Green Seal or Green Label for flooring. It's important to note that VOCs are in many things, and the products brought into the home after you move in can also contribute to indoor air-quality issues.
- » A healthy home has a heat recovery ventilator which delivers filtered fresh air into bedrooms and living rooms while removing contaminated air from the bathrooms and kitchen. To learn more, please refer to the heat recovery ventilator (HRV) details listed in the **Ventilation Information** section.
- » Look for healthy amounts of natural lighting in all areas that are regularly occupied.



## Make Healthy Product and Material Choices for Your Home

A healthy home is free of toxins, provides plenty of fresh air and lets lots of daylight in. Healthier product and material choices can reduce the toxins that potentially accumulate in your indoor environment, cut down on odours and provide a more pleasant living space that can enhance the value of your home.



## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: CREATING A HEALTHIER HOME

### Non-Toxic Products

The easiest way to keep indoor air quality toxin-free is to avoid bringing toxins into the home in the first place. Be aware that many types of carpets, paints, solvents, glues and other building materials used in the home contain toxins such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Make sure the indoor building materials are low-VOC or no-VOC. Look for paint or adhesive products certified by Green Seal, GREENGUARD, or Master Painters Institute (MPI). For carpets, look for the Carpet and Rug Institute's Green Label or equivalents.

### How to Test Carpets and Other Floor Coverings for Toxicity

1) Get a small sample of the material and place it in a clean glass jar; 2) Cover the jar and set it in a warm place, such as a sunny window, for at least an hour; 3) Open the jar and test for the presence or intensity of odours, which indicate possible toxicity. Bear in mind that you're testing a small piece of sample. Expect a proportionate increase in odour from the full piece of floor covering. (Source: CMHC.)

### Ventilation Systems

Ventilation is a good way to enhance the air quality of your home. Air contaminants with known health effects can occur in homes from a variety of sources including formaldehyde, volatile organic compounds and radon. When the weather is fine, ventilation is a simple matter of opening the windows. However, in the colder months, a ventilation system is needed to refresh the indoor air. A heat recovery ventilation (HRV) system includes filtration media that can remove gases from the home, while reusing the heat in the old air to heat the home. Ventilation systems like HRVs are needed in air-tight homes with EnerGuide ratings of about 80 or higher.



## Daylight and Views

Homes with abundant daylight create pleasant indoor environments and can contribute to the well-being of occupants. However, making sure that the home doesn't lose too much heat in winter may require using triple-paned glass or other strategies.

## Recycled Materials

Using building materials with recycled content reduces the environmental impact of home construction or renovation. Many types of basic building materials—wood products, steel, concrete and drywall with high recycled content—are readily available. Rapidly renewable products such as those made with FSC bamboo can also reduce environmental impacts. Purchasing FSC bamboo ensures that the bamboo is being regenerated. Even rapidly renewable materials can be depleted if not harvested sustainably.

## Local Manufacturers

Using building materials and products made in or near Edmonton supports the local economy and reduces the amount of energy used and greenhouse gases emitted in shipping.

## Durable Materials

Choosing durable building materials can add up to savings in the long run. Getting longer use out of building materials is good for the environment, too.

## Radon Testing

Radon is an odourless radioactive gas that occurs naturally in the environment. Naturally occurring radon arises from the breakdown of uranium, which is a common trace element in some natural geologic materials such as granite, shale, or phosphate minerals. Concentration levels vary from one house to another, even if they're similar and next door to each other. Testing for radon is simple and you can buy inexpensive radon test kits from a number of local retailers. To learn more about radon visit: [hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/radiation/radon/faq\\_fq-eng.php](http://hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/radiation/radon/faq_fq-eng.php)

## Eco-Labels

A number of organizations offer product certification programs. When choosing products or materials, always look for eco-labels such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified lumber and Green Seal paints. To learn more about these labels visit: [edmonton.ca/sustainablepurchasing](http://edmonton.ca/sustainablepurchasing) and click on Understanding the Environmental Logos in the related documents section.







# 13 | SOLAR ENERGY AND HEATING

## **Solar Energy Makes Environmental Sense**

Solar energy works in any climate and the fuel – sunshine – is free! Solar energy is sustainable and it doesn't produce greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Passive Solar Design**

A house can have passive solar design features to reduce energy consumption. In this case, a house needs to have good solar access and orientation (for example, facing southeast to southwest) with no blockage of sunlight.

Passive solar design generally involves optimal sizing and orientation of high-quality windows, careful selection of building materials that retain heat and proper building orientation and solar access.

Modest levels of passive solar heating can reduce building heating requirements by 5 to 25% at little or no additional first cost and can be implemented for most small buildings in Edmonton's climate. More integrated passive solar design of a new building can deliver up to 50% reduction of heating energy.

This design strategy requires careful integration and optimization of passive solar elements within the home's design. It's therefore best suited to new homes and is more challenging to achieve by retrofitting.

## **Clean Energy with a Low Carbon Footprint: Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Systems**

Installing renewable energy systems helps reduce Edmonton's reliance on fossil fuels. Solar energy systems generate clean energy with a very low carbon footprint, which contributes to Edmonton's climate change mitigation goals. Micro-generation (the generation of small amounts of power at the household or building level) makes Edmonton's energy system more resilient as it increases redundancy and diversity of energy sources. Promoting and encouraging solar can also help create green jobs in Edmonton and diversify the economy.



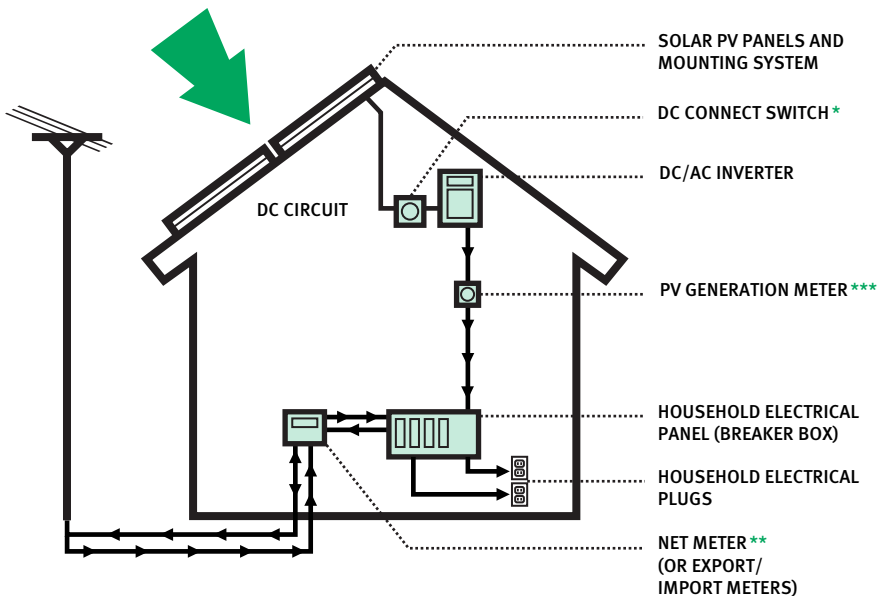
## Go Solar: Here's What to Look for

Solar panels can be installed on new or existing homes, although it's easier and cheaper to install them in new homes. In either case, consider what type of system you want: Water heating or photovoltaic (electricity-producing). Work with a qualified system designer to select the appropriate technology and system size for your home. CanSIA (the Canadian Solar Industries Association) provides guidance on selecting qualified solar energy service providers.

The most cost-effective option is to make sure the house is as energy-efficient as possible before adding solar. You should find out if energy efficiency improvements have been made to the home in combination with the solar installation.

If you're buying a newer home, look for a solar-ready house, which has had simple provisions made for adding solar panels. Making a home solar-ready costs about \$400 to \$900 depending on whether the home is solar-water-heating or solar-electricity-producing ready (or both). These provisions typically include roof space, utility room space and a pipe chase to connect the roof and utility room. Even if you decide you won't install solar right away, at least your home will be set up for it.

## Solar Home System



\* The DC Disconnect Switch allows for the system to be shut down for maintenance or in the event of a house fire

\*\* The Net Meter measures power coming from the grid and power that the house

is exporting to the grid  
\*\*\* The PV Generation Meter keeps track of how much power the PV system is generating



## Shed New Light on Price Fluctuations

Using solar energy means you'll be less affected by fluctuations and long-term increases in the price of conventional energy such as natural gas and conventional electricity. Solar panels can potentially supply anywhere from a few per cent up to 100% of your electricity and hot water needs. Passive solar design can reduce heating energy demand by 25% or more in a well-designed, high-performance passive solar home.

## Find Out More from the Solar Energy Society of Alberta

The Solar Energy Society of Alberta provides technical information, examples of installed systems and details on solar energy providers at: [solaralberta.ca](http://solaralberta.ca)



## GREEN FACTS AND TIPS: SOLAR ENERGY

### Sunny Edmonton Makes Perfect Solar Sense

Edmonton's winter climate is well-suited to solar energy. With 2,300 hours of sun in an average year, Edmonton is one of the sunniest cities in Canada. When systems are properly designed and sized to accommodate the climate, snow and ice don't have a major impact on solar energy production.

Solar energy systems can theoretically supply all the energy needs of a home although they're often sized to supply a portion of the energy demand based on affordability or the practicality for a given home. These systems can also contribute to a net-zero energy home (a home that uses zero net external energy on an annual basis).

### Solar Water Heaters

Solar water heaters can be a cost-effective way to generate hot water for your home. Most solar water heaters require a well-insulated storage tank and almost all need a back-up or booster system such as a tankless water heater for cloudy days and times of increased demand.

### Photovoltaic (PV) Panels

Photovoltaic (PV) panels are used to produce electricity as an alternative to getting all the power from the electrical utility grid. The capital costs for these systems have been dropping rapidly in the last several years. Additional information can be found at: [canmetenergy.nrcan.gc.ca/buildings-communities/energy-efficient-buildings/solar-photovoltaic/publications/2926](http://canmetenergy.nrcan.gc.ca/buildings-communities/energy-efficient-buildings/solar-photovoltaic/publications/2926)



## Grid-Connected Solar Energy Systems

Grid-connected solar energy systems tie the solar PV system to the electricity grid. This allows your house to consume the solar power generated on-site when it's available. When on-site solar power isn't available (or not meeting current demand for electricity), electricity is purchased from the grid. When the solar energy system is producing more energy than the home requires, you receive credit for sending the excess solar power to the electricity grid. This is regulated under the Micro-Generation Regulation. More information can be found at: [www.auc.ab.ca/rule-development/micro-generation/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.auc.ab.ca/rule-development/micro-generation/Pages/default.aspx)

Also, check out the application procedure and required permits:  
[edmonton.ca/SolarPermits](http://edmonton.ca/SolarPermits)

## Off-Grid PV Systems

Off-grid PV systems operate independently of the electrical utility grid but require battery storage. Designing, permitting and installing an off-grid system can be very challenging. Also, sizing the system to meet the needs of a typical Edmonton family may not be economical without pursuing energy-demand strategies.



# 14 | OTHER GREEN INNOVATIONS

There are many other emerging technologies that have potential green benefits but are not yet commonplace:

## **Geoexchange, Geothermal, or Ground-Source Heat Pumps**

These systems, often classed as renewable energy systems, use heat pumps to move heat from the ground to your home. They're highly efficient and can, in effect, multiply the amount of heating energy delivered for a given amount of electrical energy input. However, most heat pumps are powered by electricity, and Alberta's electricity grid is relatively carbon intensive (primarily due to coal-fired power plants). As a result, this option may not provide the same greenhouse gas reduction benefits that other green technologies do. This technology will reduce the home's natural gas use, however, household electricity costs will increase.

## **Wind Energy**

While large-scale wind energy generation sites are growing, small systems for homes tend to have relatively high costs compared to other options. It's also worth noting that the winds that Edmonton experiences are often intermittent and too variable in speed to generate significant quantities of electricity. As a result, it can be challenging to design a system to generate dependable power at the household level.

## **Combined Heat and Power (CHP) or Cogeneration**

This technology allows electricity and heat to be generated simultaneously on-site from fuels such as natural gas. The unit produces electricity by turning a turbine that's fuelled by natural gas (or some other fuel source). The process of turning the turbine produces heat. This heat is then captured and used to heat the home. Capturing the heat from this process and using it on-site makes CHP very efficient, which reduces the overall carbon footprint. A few houses in Edmonton have CHP, but it's not yet common.



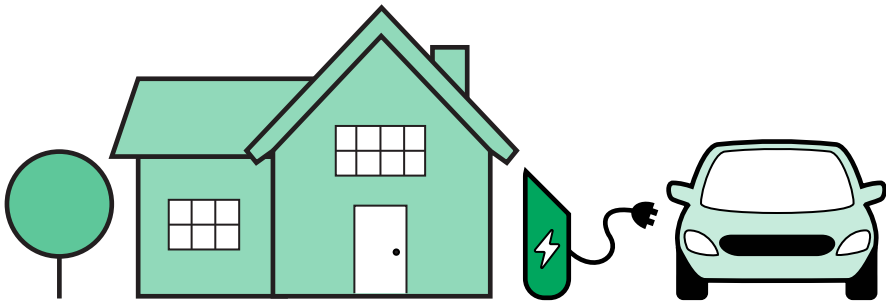


## District Energy

District heating is a system for distributing heat generated in a central location within a neighborhood for residential and commercial heating requirements such as space heating and water heating. The heat is often obtained from a cogeneration plant burning fossil fuels but increasingly biomass, although heat-only boiler stations, geothermal heating and central solar heating are also used. In specific areas of Edmonton that will be offering District Energy (DE) services, buildings with compatible hydronic (water-based) heating systems can connect. The heating needs of the building are then met by the DE system rather than by in-building energy systems like boilers or furnaces.

## Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

As electric vehicles become more common, home builders and owners may choose to install vehicle charging stations in garages or other appropriate locations. These stations need to be included in the design of the home's electrical system. As with ground-source heat pumps, unless the electricity used to power the electric vehicles comes from a green source, electric vehicles will still result in carbon emissions. Electric bicycles, however, are a great option because they use so little energy compared to a car. Electric bicycles also provide moderate physical exercise (if they're the pedal-assist type). And during some urban commutes, the rider can reach their destination quicker than by car.



# 15 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Biomass:**

Vegetation, sewage, or agricultural waste used as a fuel or energy source.

**Blower Door Test:**

A test that measures airtightness in homes and small buildings. It can also be used to find the location of major air leaks. The equipment for the test includes: 1) A temporary door covering installed in an outside doorway; 2) A fan that forces air into or out of the building; 3) A pressure measurement instrument called a Manometer to measure the pressure difference across the fan and the building envelope.

**BUILT GREEN:**

A third-party green building rating system for houses and multi-storey buildings that includes a two-in-one label that includes EnerGuide and the BUILT GREEN® seal. The homes must be built by BUILT GREEN-qualified builders.

**Carbon Footprint:**

The amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere from human activities such as the consumption of fossil fuels. In buildings, carbon is typically emitted from heating, cooling, electricity use (if the electricity is generated by fossil fuels) and hot water use.

**Climate Change Mitigation:**

Actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is expected to slow global temperature increases.

**Condominium:**

A multi-family building in which the suites in the building are individually owned and the owners pay a monthly fee to cover the operating costs of the building.





**Drain-Water Heat Recovery:**

The use of a heat exchanger to recover energy and reuse drain-water heat from various activities such as dishwashing, clothes washing and especially showers. The technology reduces energy consumption for water heating and is also known as water heat recycling, drain-line heat exchange, or grey-water heat recovery.

**Ecological Footprint:**

A measure of the amount of biologically productive land necessary to supply the resources a human population consumes and to absorb the associated waste.

**EnerGuide:**

The official Government of Canada mark associated with the labeling and rating of the energy consumption or energy efficiency of specific products. EnerGuide labeling exists for appliances, heating and cooling equipment, houses and vehicles.

**Energy Rating (ER) for Windows:**

The energy rating (ER) value is calculated using a formula that balances a product's U-value with its potential solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC) and its airtightness. The higher the number, the more energy-efficient the product. ER values normally range from 0 to 50.

**ENERGY STAR:**

The international symbol of premium energy efficiency. Products that display the ENERGY STAR symbol have been tested according to prescribed procedures and have been found to meet or exceed higher energy efficiency levels without compromising performance.

**Geoexchange:**

Low-temperature earth energy commonly used for heating and cooling a building with a heat pump. The stable temperature of the earth just below the surface can be used as a heat source or sink to generate free earth-energy for a building.



### **Geothermal Energy:**

Energy derived from the heat in the interior of the earth.

### **Greenhouse Effect:**

The earth's atmosphere acts somewhat like the glass of a greenhouse. Some incoming radiation from the sun is reflected directly back to space by the earth's atmosphere and surface, and some is absorbed by the atmosphere. The rest of the incoming radiation is absorbed by the earth's oceans and land, where it's converted into heat, warming the surface of the earth and the air above it. Particular gases in the atmosphere act like the glass of a greenhouse, preventing the heat from escaping. Without this natural greenhouse effect, the earth would be much colder – about 33 C colder – making the average temperature on the planet a freezing -18 C rather than the 15 C it is now.

### **Greenhouse Gases (GHGs):**

Any of the gases whose absorption of solar radiation is responsible for the greenhouse effect, including carbon dioxide, methane, ozone and the fluorocarbons.

### **Ground-Source Heat Pump (GSHP):**

A central heating and/or cooling system that pumps heat to or from the ground. It uses the earth as a heat source in the winter, or a heat sink in the summer. This design takes advantage of the moderate temperatures in the ground to boost efficiency and reduce the operational costs of heating and cooling systems. Also known as a geexchange system.

### **Heat Recovery Ventilator (HRV):**

A fully ducted system that delivers fresh-filtered air from outside the house to the living room and bedrooms, and extracts stale air from high-moisture areas such as bathrooms, kitchens and laundries.

### **Hydronic Heating:**

A heating system that transfers heat by circulating a fluid through a closed system of pipes.

### **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED):**

A third-party certification program and an internationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings, homes and neighborhoods. The program is administered in Canada by the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC).



**Location Efficiency:**

A term that describes how easily you can access work, shopping, entertainment, parks and other amenities from your home, either by walking or through the use of transit. If the location of your home results in easier walks, shorter car trips and faster access to transit, it's generally considered a more efficient location.

**Low-Emissivity (Low-E) Coating:**

The coating put on glass to reduce its thermal (heat) emissivity (loss). Low-E-coated windows can provide greater thermal efficiency (insulation properties) than regular windows.

**Multi-Family Building:**

Under the EnerGuide program, a multi-family building is defined as any building that has 4 or more levels or storeys, and where 50% or more of the floor area is residential.

**Net-Zero Home:**

A home that produces at least as much energy on-site from a renewable source as it uses on an annual basis.

**Passive Design:**

Passive design is key to green building design. It's an approach that maximizes the use of free, renewable sources of energy such as sun and wind to provide household heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting. This reduces or removes the need for mechanical heating or cooling. Using passive design can reduce temperature changes, improve indoor air quality and make a home drier and more enjoyable to live in. (Passive design is also called passive solar design.)

**Photovoltaic (PV) Panels:**

Specially designed panels that convert solar energy into electricity, as an alternative to getting power from the electrical utility grid. Also called solar panels.

**R-2000:**

Operated by the Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) Office of Energy Efficiency, R-2000 is a voluntary standard for new homes which demands a high level of energy efficiency, typically beyond what building codes require.



**RSI:**

R-value, which stands for “resistance value,” provides a means for quantifying the thermal resistance of an insulating material. If the the R-value is high, the material is a good thermal insulator and heat will not easily flow through it. If the R-value is low, the material is a poor insulator. RSI stands for “R-value Système International,” meaning it measures the same quantity but uses the international metric system of units. Converting one to the other requires some simple math. **R-value** (US) = RSI 5.678263337 or **RSI** (SI) = R-value 0.1761101838

**R-Value (Insulation):**

A measure of thermal resistance used in the building and construction industry. Thermal resistance is a measure of a temperature difference by which an object or material resists a heat flow. Therefore, the higher the R-value, the more effectively the insulation resists the transfer of heat (less heat escapes your home in the winter and less heat enters your home in the summer).

**Single-Family Home:**

Under the EnerGuide program, a single-family home includes the following building types: Fully detached house, duplex, triplex, fourplex, row house, or low-rise multi-family building no more than 3 storeys high and in which over 50% of the floor area is residential.

**Solar Gain:**

The increase in temperature in a space, object, or structure that results from solar radiation. The amount of solar gain increases with the strength of the sun and with the ability of any intervening material to transmit or resist the solar rays. This concept is also referred to as solar heat gain or passive solar gain.

**Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC):**

The number to know when selecting windows, doors and skylights. It's a measure of how much of the sun's heat is transmitted through those fixtures, expressed in a number from 0 to 1. A window that has a SHGC of 0.3 allows 30% of the sun's heat to pass through. Whether you want a higher or lower number depends on your goal: A product with a low SHGC helps block heat and reduce cooling loads in hot weather; a product with a high SHGC is more effective at harnessing solar heat in cold weather.



**U-Value:**

The heat transfer coefficient that describes how well a building element conducts heat. It measures the rate of heat transfer through a building element over a given area under standardized conditions. The usual standard is at a temperature gradient of 24 C, at 50% humidity, with no wind. A smaller U-value is better at reducing heat transfer. A value of 0.33 is a good benchmark for a double-paned, argon-filled window.

**Walk Score:**

A large-scale, public access walkability index that assigns a numerical walkability score to any address in Canada. The final score gives you a general idea of how walkable your area is by analyzing how close common, everyday amenities like grocery stores, transit stops, shopping malls, etc. are to your home.

**Window-To-Wall Ratio:**

The proportion of the building facade area that has glass compared to solid wall provides a benchmark of the thermal performance of the building envelope as a whole. Generally, the larger the window area, the more energy that's required to heat the building.







# **THE GREEN HOME GUIDE CHECKLISTS**

# SINGLE-FAMILY HOME CHECKLIST

◆ ADDED VALUE AND HIGH PERFORMANCE

	QUESTIONS TO ASK	WHAT TO LOOK FOR		BENEFITS
		RESALE	NEW	
LOCATION	Is transit readily accessible or can I walk to work, school and recreation activities?	Whether you're buying a new or existing home, look for a house that's within a 5 to 10-minute walk (400 to 800 metres) of a transit stop, a grocery store, a park and other daily destinations.		This is a feature you cannot change. Your location is important in reducing your household energy costs and maximizing the convenience of your lifestyle.
HOME SIZE	What is the square footage of the home?	A home that provides less than 46 sq. m (500 sq. ft.) per person is more resource efficient than a larger home.		Choosing the right size of home can save you money on your heating and electricity bills every month.
ENERGUIDE RATING SYSTEM	What is the EnerGuide rating of the home?	The EnerGuide rating is on a scale from 0 to 100. A higher EnerGuide rating means the home is more energy-efficient.		EnerGuide for Houses is a measure of the home's energy performance. Not all homes have a label but it's easy to get and is extremely important for determining the energy efficiency of the home. Your energy bills can be among your greatest monthly expenses. Choosing an energy-efficient home reduces your energy costs.
		EnerGuide 66 to 74 (a retrofitted older home).	EnerGuide 80 and above (an energy-efficient new home).	



	QUESTIONS TO ASK	WHAT TO LOOK FOR <b>RESALE</b>	<b>NEW</b>	BENEFITS
BUILDING ENVELOPE	Is the home air-tight?	Ask if a blower door test has been done. A reading of 2.5 ACH at 50 Pa is considered current good practice, whereas an R-2000 home will have a reading of 1.5 ACH at 50 Pa. A lower exchange rate signifies better airtightness.		Reducing the amount of air that leaks in and out of your home is an easy and cost-effective way to cut heating and cooling costs, improve durability and increase comfort.
	Is the home well-insulated?	A qualified professional can test the level of a home's insulation. Ask if the home has had an energy audit done. This report will indicate the levels of insulation in the home.	<p>The Alberta Building Code specifies minimum insulation standards. But insulation levels that exceed the Building Code are recommended if you want to reduce your home's energy consumption and costs.</p> <p>For example, insulation for a typical EnerGuide 80 house:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>Roofs/Attic: R-40 to R-50</b></li> <li>» <b>Walls: R-22 to R-25</b></li> <li>» <b>Foundation walls: R-15</b></li> </ul>	<p>Your home's insulation keeps the heat inside when it's cold outside and keeps your home cool when it's hot outside.. Ensuring your home is well-insulated is a key to saving on your heating bills and staying comfortable.</p> <p>It also keeps the home quieter.</p>
	Are the windows ENERGY STAR-labeled and triple-paned?	Check to see that the windows are triple-paned.	<p>If the window isn't ENERGY STAR-rated, look for a window with a high energy rating (ER).</p> <p>As a guide, an ENERGY STAR-qualified window in Edmonton's climatic region will have an energy rating (ER) of 29. The higher the ER, the more energy-efficient the window is.</p>	<p>Energy-efficient windows, doors or skylights reduce your home heating costs by 7 to 12%.</p> <p>It also improves comfort near windows and keeps the home quieter.</p>
VENTILATION	Does the home have a heat recovery ventilator (HRV)?	An HRV system would likely only be installed in an existing home if it was already air-tight. If the home's envelope has been upgraded, look for an HRV also being installed.	Although other methods of ventilation are available, if your home has a high EnerGuide rating of 80 or more, an HRV is considered the best solution to provide fresh air indoors while maintaining energy efficiency through heat recovery.	<p>An HRV provides numerous benefits, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» a healthier home</li> <li>» energy savings</li> <li>» greater ventilation control</li> <li>» prevention of the buildup of contaminants that can enter and become trapped in the house</li> <li>» control of moisture, which can minimize mould growth</li> </ul>



	QUESTIONS TO ASK	WHAT TO LOOK FOR <b>RESALE</b> <b>NEW</b>	BENEFITS
HOME HEATING	Is the home's furnace ENERGY STAR-rated?	If your home's furnace doesn't come with an ENERGY STAR label, look for an EnerGuide annual fuel utilization efficiency (AFUE) rating of greater than or equal to 95% (high-efficiency furnace).  In a resale home, even if the furnace has an ENERGY STAR label, ask when the furnace was replaced. Older ENERGY STAR furnaces would not meet the same standard of the ENERGY STAR furnaces of today.	The heating system is your home's largest energy user, so making it more energy-efficient can make it one of the biggest cost savers.
	Are there programmable thermostats?	Programmable thermostats are an easy and inexpensive way to reduce energy use. Look for an ENERGY STAR-rated, mercury-free thermostat that is easy to program.	Setting back the temperature each night from 21 to 17 C can reduce yearly annual heating costs by 4 to 6%.
	Is there a drain heat recovery system?	These systems capture up to 60% of the waste heat passing through the drains from hot water sources like sinks, showers, bathtubs, dishwashers and clothes washers.	Drain heat recovery systems can cut hot water costs in half and have no moving parts so they never break and should last as long as the house.
HOT WATER HEATERS	Is the home's hot water tank ENERGY STAR-rated, and does it include tankless water heaters?	First, look to see if the home has 1 or more tankless water heaters. If the home has a central hot water tank, check to see if it's an ENERGY STAR model.  If not, the hot water heater should have a high energy factor (EF). The EF measures the efficiency of the water heater by comparing the energy supplied in heated water to the total daily energy consumption of the water heater. Look for an EF of 0.67 or higher.  Check for a drainwater heat recovery system.	The water heating system is the second-largest user of energy in the average home, so it's another area for excellent savings.
GREEN RATING SYSTEMS	Is the home certified by a recognized green building rating system?	Look for homes certified by any of these rating systems:  BuiltGreen LEED Canada Passive House R-2000 ENERGY STAR for Homes	A green building certification typically goes beyond energy efficiency, so it can be a useful way to ensure that the home has a wide range of green features.
HIGH-EFFICIENCY APPLIANCES	Are the major appliances ENERGY STAR-rated?	Look for an ENERGY STAR-rated refrigerator, dishwasher, microwave, washer and dryer. Stoves and ovens aren't ENERGY STAR-rated.  You can also compare EnerGuide labels, which, under federal law, all new electrical appliances in Canada must have.  Look for condensing or heat pump dryers.	ENERGY STAR-rated appliances typically use at least 20% less energy. ENERGY STAR dishwashers and clothes washers also save water. A front-loading clothes washer uses 35 to 45% less water, and 60% less energy.



	QUESTIONS TO ASK	WHAT TO LOOK FOR <b>RESALE</b>	<b>NEW</b>	BENEFITS
WATER CONSUMPTION	Does the home have low-flush toilets and low-flow showerheads and faucets?	Try to meet or exceed the City's requirements for new homes and major renovations, shown in the column to right.	The City mandates water-efficient fixtures for new homes and major renovations:  » Toilets: 6 litres per flush  » Faucets: 8.3 litres per minute  » Showerheads: 9.5 litres per minute	Simple, low-cost water conserving fixtures can reduce your water consumption and water bills significantly. They also lower your energy costs by reducing the amount of water that needs to be heated. By switching to energy-efficient and water-wise low-flow fixtures and appliances, the average Edmonton household could save over \$300 a year.
LANDSCAPING AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT	Does the home's garden and lawn area have low irrigation needs	Look for native plants and not too much turfed lawn area.		Eco-landscaping not only reduces water use, but typically reduces fertilizer and pest-and-disease-control requirements. Also, how your lot is landscaped has an impact on water conservation and water quality in the North Saskatchewan River.
	Are trees strategically placed on the lot?	Look for a well-placed line of evergreen trees on the north and west side of your home. Deciduous trees along the south side provide summer shade, while still allowing winter sunshine.		Well-placed trees provide shelter against winter winds and summer sun, reducing your home's demand for heating and cooling.
	Does the home have an irrigation system?	Look for an existing rain barrel or an area that can easily accommodate a rain barrel. If an underground irrigation system is in place, look for drip or low-volume nozzles as these reduce water flow rates. Automatic shut-off devices or irrigation timers and controllers can further optimize irrigation and reduce wastage.		More than half of the water applied to lawns can be lost to evaporation and runoff due to overwatering.
HEALTHY HOMES AND ENVIRONMENT	Were sustainable materials used in the construction or renovation of the home?	A healthier new or existing home uses low-volatile organic compounds (VOC) paints, glues and flooring materials, with eco-labels such as Green Seal or Green Label for flooring.		Edmontonians spend a great deal of time indoors (particularly in winter), so it's important to make indoor spaces as healthy as possible.
	Is there ample natural light?	Check to see that there's plenty of natural light in all the regularly occupied rooms.		Homes with abundant daylight create pleasant indoor environments and can contribute to the well-being of home occupants over the long term. However, making sure that the home doesn't lose too much heat in winter may require using triple-paned glass or other strategies.



	QUESTIONS TO ASK	WHAT TO LOOK FOR <b>RESALE</b>	<b>NEW</b>	BENEFITS
HEALTHY HOMES cont.	Have recycled and locally sourced materials been used in the construction?	Depending on when the house was built, the seller may not know the amount of locally sourced or recycled materials used in the home construction. But it doesn't hurt to ask.	Look for recycled and local content in building materials, especially those that make up a large percentage of the overall home materials, such as wood, concrete and steel.	Local and recycled materials are less greenhouse-gas-intensive than new materials shipped from far away.
SOLAR ENERGY AND HEATING	Does the home include passive design to reduce energy consumption?	It's more challenging to retrofit existing homes for passive design.	Effective passive design can be achieved with careful integration of different design elements, on sites with good solar access and potential to orient the home for better performance.	Passive solar design, when done properly, can reduce energy consumption significantly while adding minimal cost.
	Does the unit face north or south?	Optimally, the longer axis of the building should have east-west orientation, within 15 degrees. Most of the window area should be on the south side, with a smaller amount of windows located on the north side.		Not all homes can have this orientation. So try to take the principles of solar orientation and passive solar and apply them (where possible) during your house hunt.
	Does the home have solar panels? If not, is the home solar-ready?	<p>The home may have pre-installed solar panels, or the home may be solar-ready so that you can easily install solar panels later.</p> <p>If panels are installed, find out how much of the home's energy needs are met by the solar energy system.</p>		Solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generation reduces your exposure to future energy price increases and is a feasible, renewable energy option for Edmonton's climate.
OTHER GREEN INNOVATIONS	Does the house have other green technology such as geexchange, combined heat and power, or an electric vehicle charging station?	Solar energy systems can be sized to provide up to 100% of the energy needs, but older homes aren't usually energy-efficient enough to make this economical. That doesn't mean solar energy systems aren't possible for older homes, just that it might make sense to invest in energy efficiency improvements in combination with solar.	A new home should be built to adapt to new technology. If solar panels don't fit into your current budget plans, ask if the home is solar-ready. (This means conduit and other such provisions have already been added, which makes future installation much easier.)	
		These systems are emerging in the marketplace and it's worth asking the builder or seller if the systems have been installed in the home.		These technologies can provide increased efficiency and/or provide alternative energy/fuel sources.



# CONDO CHECKLIST

If you're looking for a new condo, you'll want to ask many of the questions covered in the **Single-Family Home Checklist** section, especially those related to location, green rating systems, energy efficiency and water efficiency. However, condominiums also include additional common areas and unique amenities and you need to know how green they are. Even if the condo you buy doesn't have all of these things, you could work with the condo board to see if some of them can be implemented. Here are some additional questions that pertain to multi-family condominiums:

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

## BENEFITS

### IN EACH UNIT

**How is heat supplied to the unit?**

Look for hydronic heat (hot water radiators or in-floor radiant heating) instead of electric baseboard heaters. Ask how efficient the boiler is and about its service record.

An energy-efficient boiler has an annual fuel utilization efficiency (AFUE) of 85% or more. It's also important to see a history of utility bills for the building. If heating costs have changed over time, it's important to know why.

Space heating is the single largest consumer of energy in a building. Hydronic heating is considered one of the most efficient ways of heating multi-unit residential buildings. However, if the condominium unit comes with a forced-air furnace, look for tips in the Single-Family Home Checklist section.

**How will you be charged for electricity, gas and water?**

Find out if each of the units has its own electricity and water meter. Very few buildings have individual meters for gas heating at this time (but it saves you money if the building has them).

Individual unit meters help save money, water and energy as you'll pay less if you use less.

**If there's a gas fireplace in the unit or in the common area, does it have electronic ignition, and is it on a timer?**

Make sure that any gas fireplaces turn off automatically. New gas fireplaces with electronic ignition save gas associated with keeping a pilot light on.

Gas fireplaces consume a significant amount of natural gas and are easy to leave on by accident. Also, the pilot lights on older fireplace models consume gas. They're often tricky to light and tend to be left on throughout the summer months.



QUESTIONS TO ASK	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	BENEFITS
<b>IN THE BUILDING</b>		
<b>Is the window-to-wall ratio optimized?</b>	Look for units that provide a good amount of daylight but minimize windows (for example, glazing). As a rule of thumb, if the proportion of window-to-wall area is more than 50%, then the building has too much window and not enough insulated wall area.	Although a lot of windows can be a great addition to your condo unit, they provide less insulation than walls. An over-glazed building becomes more expensive to heat in winter, and can be uncomfortably warm in summer.
<b>Are there low-energy lights and automatic timer controls in the common areas?</b>	Look for light emitting diode (LED) and compact fluorescent (CFL) light bulbs in the hallways, front entrance, exterior lighting locations and parking area. Also look for lighting controls that are motion-activated or on timers/photocells.	CFL lights use 1/4 of the energy and last up to 10-times longer than incandescent lights. LED lights use even less energy. Both types of lights save additional energy when controlled by photocells, timers, or motion sensors.
<b>Are the hot water recirculation tanks in the building on a timer?</b>	Ask if timers are used to reduce the hot water temperature during early morning hours, when there's almost no demand for hot water.	Hot water tank timers can save a significant amount of money over the course of a year, and they're very inexpensive to install.
<b>Is there drain-water heat recovery?</b>	In larger (and mostly newer) condominium buildings, it's cost-effective to capture and recirculate the heat in waste water from showers, kitchens, etc. Find out if the building has been fitted with heat recovery coils around drain pipes.	Hot water heating typically consumes the second-largest amount of energy in condominiums. The heat recovered from the outflowing bathroom and kitchen drains can be used to pre-heat hot water for future use, saving you money and energy.
<b>Does the building have any renewable energy equipment?</b>	Ask if any solar hot water or photovoltaic (PV) systems have been installed in the building.	After the capital costs of these renewable technologies have been recouped, they can reduce energy costs significantly.
<b>Are there accessible and secure bike facilities?</b>	Look for bike racks that are easily accessible, secure and large enough to accommodate all those who would use them.	Bike racks encourage you and your visitors to use more sustainable forms of transportation more often.
<b>Are electric bikes welcome in the building?</b>	Look for designated areas in the building for secure storage of electric bicycles and scooters, preferably with access to a few electrical outlets for recharging.	For city driving distances of 25 minutes or less, electric bikes can often get their riders to their destination faster and at a far lower fuel cost than a car. It costs less than 20 cents to charge an electric bike (distance coverage: about 40 kilometres).



**QUESTIONS  
TO ASK****WHAT TO LOOK FOR****BENEFITS****IN THE BUILDING Cont.**

**What energy-saving and health-oriented initiatives are being pursued by the condominium board?**

When reviewing condo documents, look for evidence that the condo board is making energy-saving improvements such as maintaining or adding controls on the air exchanger, changing boiler filters regularly, sealing air leaks, insulating pipes, using non-toxic paints and adhesives, buying eco-friendly cleaners, etc. Also ask if the condo board is purchasing any green power.

An energy-aware condo board and property management company ensures you're keeping your energy costs low while maintaining good levels of building comfort and health.

**Are green landscaping techniques being used?**

Ask if the plants outside the building are watered on a water-saving drip irrigation system with timers, and whether the plants are fed with organic nutrients instead of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

A drip irrigation system conserves water and saves money. The use of organic soil amendments (like fish bones) reduces health risks for kids and pets playing among the plants.

**Does the building have a good system for waste recycling and composting?**

Look for an ample, well-ventilated, well-lit and clean area with clearly marked bins: A blue one for recyclables and one for general waste. (If the building doesn't have a blue bin, check for the nearest recycling depot at: [edmonton.ca/waste](http://edmonton.ca/waste)). Also look for outdoor bins for on-site composting or grasscycling.

Recycling costs less and keeps valuable materials out of landfills. On-site composting is the single most cost-effective way to reduce waste at the source and can add nutrients to the plants around the condo. (Organic food and yard waste make up about 30% of total waste.)

**If there's a pool, is it being operated in an energy-efficient manner?**

Ask about the pool operation and see if the temperature is turned down in the summer months, or if thermal blankets are placed over the pool at night.

Pools and hot tubs can be a great addition to any lifestyle but they require a lot of energy. Adding a thermal blanket at night can reduce energy consumption by 50% in an indoor pool and 70% in an outdoor pool.

**If there's a fitness room, is the fitness equipment energy-efficient?**

Ask if any of the equipment is energy-efficient. While no fitness equipment has been certified ENERGY STAR, non-electric versions are available for some of the most popular exercise machines. Some fitness equipment is energy-generating and is used to power the lights and music in the fitness room!

Not only does using fitness equipment that produces energy make you feel good, it can even make you healthier. Studies have shown that people exercise longer on fitness equipment that generates energy, especially if they can see a read-out of the energy they're generating.









**WORKING  
TOWARDS  
A GREENER  
FUTURE**

# THE WAY WE GREEN —



# WORKING TOWARDS A GREENER FUTURE

Edmonton's Green Home Guide is an important part of Edmonton's ongoing effort to become a sustainable and resilient city. The Guide is an implementation piece of the City of Edmonton's Green Building Policy and The Way We Green, Edmonton's Environmental Strategic Plan. The Guide invites you to build and retrofit your home to a greener standard and join other Edmontonians on the quest to become a carbon neutral city!







# NOTES

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Here when life happens.

August 8, 2013

A/ Program Manager,  
Corporate Environmental Management  
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RE: Green Home Guide

On behalf of the 3,200 members of the REALTORS® Association of Edmonton, I extend many thanks for your efforts to produce the City of Edmonton's Green Home Guide. This will be a very useful document for consumers which provides background information on various energy efficiency improvements and green features that are possible in today's residential market (both new and resale). The booklet will help convey the value and benefits of the green features that are available in the market with a desired outcome of better informed consumer choice.

The REALTORS® Association of Edmonton is pleased to endorse the publication and to provide access to copies to our members and their clients. Our marketing department will provide a copy of the appropriate logo to print on the publication.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darrell Cook', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Darrell Cook  
President





August 28, 2013

A/ Program Manager,  
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RE: Green Home Guide

The Canadian Home Builders' Association – Edmonton Region is pleased to lend its support to the City of Edmonton's Green Home Guide.

This publication has a wealth of information and timely advice for new home buyers and home owners planning their renovation. By bringing together information on green features and innovations, energy-saving ideas and facts and tips on green practices within one concise document, everyone involved in home building and renovating will have a valuable resource to assist in making informed choices.

The creative partnership of municipal initiatives, corporate commitments and individual actions enables all of us to positively affect our environment, one small footprint at a time.

Yours truly,

Rod Taverner  
President







