

California Green Builder was developed by the California Building Industry Association in 2001. Its purpose then and now is to provide builders in California a roadmap to building green. The program was designed from the ground up with the production building environment in mind. The certification process aims to fit as seamlessly into the builders' schedule as possible, and the program delivers quantifiable results which aid in the marketing of the program to homebuyers and demonstrating the program's effectiveness to jurisdictions. As of the first quarter of 2008, 15 builders have enrolled 6,400 homes in the program, with 1,759 of those homes having already achieved final certification.

The current program requirements have been in place since 2005. To qualify for the program, a home must do the following:

- Save energy by exceeding the California energy code (Title 24) by 15%;
- Save a minimum of 20,000 gallons of water per year;
- Use of wood from a certified sustainable source and use engineered wood products, such as Oriented Strand Board (OSB) and Medium Density Fiberboard (MDF;)
- Reduce waste by ensuring no more than 50% of construction waste is sent to a landfill;
- Improve indoor air quality by having an engineered HVAC design, a MERV 6 air filter, and use low or no-VOC paints, finishes, and adhesives.

After applying for certification, homes undergo a plan check to verify compliance with the requirements of the program. Inspections from state certified HERS raters are then required to ensure the home has been built as designed.

California Green Builder actively works with builders, trade associations, local governments, and utilities to develop financial and non-financial incentives for builders who participate in the program. In addition, CGB provides marketing support and sales agent training to participating builders.

Specifically, California Green Builder is the template for the City of Riverside's Riverside Green Builder program, the County of San Bernardino's green program, and an incentive program through the Imperial Irrigation District.

California Green Builder stands out from many other green programs because of its absence of a checklist. Instead of a "points based" system, CGB uses its five resource savings target as the program requirements. This ensures all homes meet a minimum level of resource savings as well as making the program easier to convey to Homebuyers. CGB feels being able to quantify the energy and water savings of a home has a greater impact on the homebuyer than attributing a number of points to a home.

The 1,759 homes certified under the program combine to save the following, per year:

- 881 MWh of electricity
- 84,433 therms of natural gas
- 38,760,000 gallons of water
- 842 tons of Carbon Dioxide emission