

THE SMART LIVING TEAM

Green Buying Guide

There is a lot of talk about the many benefits of living in a “green home” these days. But what exactly is a green home and how is it different from a conventional home? The answer can be technical, based on specific standards. Or it can be very personal based on your goals for living. What makes the Smart Living Team different from other real estate professionals is that we strongly believe that when it comes to helping YOU find the right home for YOU the personal and the technical are equally important.

Here’s a quick look at just some of the benefits you can expect from living in a green home. These benefits are measureable, so you can evaluate and compare based on your own goals and priorities before you buy.

Cost savings through energy efficiency

A well-designed and constructed green home is predicted to use an **estimated 30 to 60 percent less energy** than a conventional home built to meet today’s energy codes. Do the math and that adds up to hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars saved per year. *Heads up:* Energy savings for green-certified homes are verified by an independent third party to provide an anticipated range of energy savings and to allow for comparison between homes.

Here’s how you save with an energy efficient home. Think of the cost of owning your home as including not only your monthly mortgage payment, taxes and insurance, but also your monthly utilities. An energy efficient green home may easily save you \$50 to \$100 per month. If you paid \$10,000 more for your green home, your mortgage would be about \$42 more per month but you would be saving more than that in energy costs.

FACT: Green homes often cost less to own than conventional homes. How is this possible?

- Green homes are designed and built in a way that allows them to be comfortably heated and cooled with minimal energy usage. The design, orientation, construction materials and methods, and systems installed can all add up to greater energy cost savings. The quality of construction matters when it comes to energy efficiency as much or more than actual materials used. That’s why third party verification is important. The cost savings from reduced energy consumption
- Energy costs can be further minimized, and in many cases even eliminated, through the use of renewable energy, most often in the form of solar panels. The energy generated by the solar panels offsets the energy consumed by the home. This means minimal or no energy costs, and for many solar-home owners, there is actual income from the production of solar energy.

Better health through improved indoor air quality

Healthy indoor air is fast becoming a high priority for many homebuyers as awareness of indoor air pollutants grows. Here are some air quality features typically found in greener homes:

- Proper ventilation and air filtration to reduce mold and mildew.
- Reduction of contaminants such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that often occur in paint, particleboard, and other materials commonly used in conventional homes.
- Room-by-room HVAC load calculations and balancing.
- Garage to home air pollutant minimization.
- Radon gas detection and remediation. Las Cruces is in an area of moderate risk for excessive radon gas, a potentially deadly indoor pollutant. Heads up: There is no way to know if a home site is at risk. But green homes offer ways to reduce the risk of radon gas, and to remediate the problem if it is shown to exist in higher than acceptable levels.

Durability and sustainability

Green homes are generally built to higher quality standards than conventional homes. Here's why many consumers are increasingly looking at increasingly looking at greener homes to **minimize their long term costs and maximize their return on investment:**

- The emphasis on quality and durability in building materials and systems reduces maintenance and generally extends the life of the home.
- Green homes often include environmentally preferable materials including recycled or renewable materials that are generally more attractive and interesting than conventional materials.

Water conservation

Water is hands-down our most important, life-sustaining resource. Here's how green homes can easily achieve **at least a 30 percent reduction** in indoor and outdoor water use in the home, which not only saves you money, but preserves this precious resource for future generations:

- WaterSense-certified low-flow fixtures, which look great and work even better, can help save significant amounts of water indoors.
- Landscaping and irrigation systems can be designed to minimize the use of drinking water for watering plants.
- Appropriate landscaping plans assure proper management of stormwater, and include non-invasive, preferably indigenous plants and vegetation.

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