

Green Building

A healthier, more efficient home helps our environment



Buildings in the U.S. consume almost two-thirds of total electricity, use 12% of potable water, and contribute 30% of total global warming gas emissions.

Energy use in Minnesota is highly dependent on fossil fuels that release air pollutants and carbon dioxide, a global warming gas. Fossil fuels are used in power plants to make electricity for home appliances, in furnaces/boilers for residential space and water heating, and in gas-powered engines to transport building materials and maintain lawns. The potable water piped into homes uses a lot of fossil fuel energy for purification at treatment facilities. The manufacture of some building materials is also energy-intensive. For example, producing one ton of cement creates one ton of carbon dioxide.



Programmable thermostat

Whether you are building a new home or remodeling an existing one, green building offers strategies to save money operating your home, create a healthier living space, and reduce your impact on the environment.



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Green building strategies combat global warming

Yard and garden

- Create more green space and less pavement area.
- Use native plants instead of turf to reduce mowing, irrigation, and pesticides.
- Plant shade trees on the east and west sides of the house.
- Use pervious paving materials so rain can soak in, not run off.
- Plant an evergreen windbreak on the northwest side of the house.

Energy efficiency

- Buy Energy Star appliances, windows, doors, and heating/cooling equipment.
- Air seal and insulate the attic and walls.
- Weatherstrip old doors and windows.

Water conservation

- Collect rainwater to use for irrigation.
- Buy ultra low-flow faucet aerators, showerheads, and fixtures.

Healthier living space

- Buy paints, caulks, and sealants with low volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Building products

- Whenever possible, buy building materials produced locally or regionally.
- Consider recycled-content products which are made using less energy and water.
- Choose sustainably harvested wood products with the FSC label to keep forests intact.
- Buy products made from rapidly renewable materials like cork and ag-fiber.
- Reuse building materials whenever possible.
- If cement is needed, request it be blended with at least 15% fly ash.



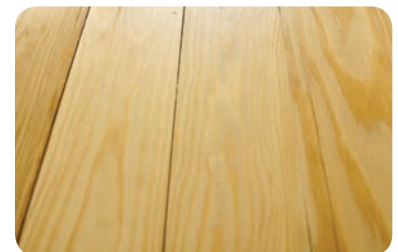
Pervious paving for driveways and walks



Energy Star appliances



Runoff-reducing rain barrels



Sustainably harvested wood flooring



Concrete insulated with wood waste