



# About Earth Advantage New Homes

## EARTH ADVANTAGE NEW HOMES CERTIFICATION

New homes certified as Earth Advantage® and ENERGY STAR® meet strict green building and energy standards. They have been verified through third-party inspections and performance testing.

An Earth Advantage-certified house incorporates design elements, systems and materials that create superior indoor air quality, use natural resources responsibly, protect land, and lower water usage. Combining these benefits with the energy efficiency standards of ENERGY STAR ensures that this home exhibits superior performance and environmental responsibility compared to a traditionally built home.

### THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATION

Third-party certification offers many benefits to a homeowner. Most important is that a third-party such as Earth Advantage Institute has assisted the builder and verified that systems and materials are properly installed. Third-party testing and an Energy Performance Score audit has confirmed that this home is performing to its highest potential.

*See back page to learn more about the benefits of third-party certification.*



## THE FIVE PILLARS OF CERTIFICATION

### Energy

By using high performance equipment and increased insulation, this home's monthly energy bills can be significantly lower than those of a traditionally built home, saving you money from the day you move in. The home's reduced energy needs will cause fewer carbon emissions and require less fossil fuel. Comfort is also improved by increased air sealing of the home, which reduces drafts.

### Health

Indoor air plays a major role in overall health and lifestyle. This home contains fewer products that off-gas harmful chemicals. It also incorporates a ventilation and filtration system that reduce airborne contaminants, diminishing the chances of allergies, asthma, and other more serious health risks.

### Water

This home was built using water-wise technologies that help lower utility bills and reduce the total amount of water needed to maintain a comfortable lifestyle. Water shortages are a primary concern in the 21st century, and this home addresses water conservation needs.

### Materials

New home construction and upkeep depend heavily on natural resources. The use of locally manufactured products is encouraged, because they are environmentally responsible and durable. This helps the environment by reducing the amount of future materials needed to maintain the home.

### Land Development

Practices used during the construction of this home diminish land degradation and deforestation, promote healthy landscapes, reduce waste, and prevent potential erosion associated with lot development during the construction process.





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## THE VALUE OF THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATION

### CREDIBILITY

"Green" has become a marketing buzzword, and some companies make exaggerated advertising claims. Having a home certified through a thirdparty like Earth Advantage Institute means the home has a seal of approval that the homebuyer can trust.

### INFORMATION

Green building affects virtually every component and system. Builders often need the help of a specialist to identify options and select the appropriate improvements. Third-party certifiers often serve as consultants by researching new products and techniques. Because certifiers work with a large number of houses, homeowners can be assured that these processes have been proven in practice.

### QUALITY ASSURANCE

A large number of tradespeople and subcontractors work on each home: carpenters, plumbers, electricians, HVAC technicians, etc. These workers require a clear understanding of what is expected of them. A certifier such as Earth Advantage Institute assists with training workers and then evaluating their work to ensure that it meets standards.

Each home receives at least two inspections. The first is to assess insulation, mechanical equipment and window installation, check moisture levels and inspect building techniques. The second inspection evaluates the operation of heating and cooling systems, the finished products, and the overall air tightness of the home. The certification tells a homebuyer that these systems and materials installed by different parties conform to the Earth Advantage certification and manufacturers' standards.

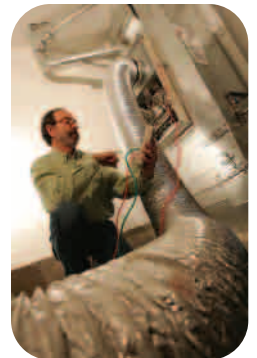


### TESTING

Even the best equipment must be installed properly to achieve full efficiency. Certification provides the homeowner with the assurance that all systems and materials work together correctly. Forced air heating system ducts are tested for air leaks, heat pumps are thoroughly examined for proper air flow, and refrigerant charge. Ventilation systems are tested for air flow and proper control. Certifiers check water flow of faucets and showerheads to ensure they don't exceed efficiency standards. In wood-frame buildings, the moisture content of lumber is checked to avoid growth of mold or decay organisms.

### VALUE

Recent market studies have shown that in many areas certified new homes sell for up to 10 percent more than conventional homes. Even in a slower economy, the market share of certified homes versus conventional homes has continued to rise, especially in metropolitan areas. Certified homes in greater Portland sold for an average of 12 percent more than conventional homes in 2008-2009.



*Earth Advantage Institute is a nonprofit organization that works with the building industry to help implement sustainable building practices. Its mission is to create an immediate, practical, and cost-effective path to sustainability and reduction of carbon in the built environment.*

