

OTTAWA RENOVATES+

COMPLIMENTARY

**RENO
TOUR
2018**



2018 GUIDE

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What is a true Green home?

The energy efficiency of Canadian homes has increased greatly in recent decades. In fact, according to Natural Resources Canada, energy efficiency in the residential sector improved 45 per cent between 1990 and 2013, saving Canadians \$12 billion in energy costs in 2013 alone.

Why is it happening? For many reasons, including upgrades to the building code as well as advances in both design and building materials.

Over the next decade, the picture should get even better as various levels of government accelerate energy-efficient requirements in building codes.

But there are many options beyond just the building code for achieving even greener homes. Those options generally involve some form of green certification.

All green certifications have a common thread: energy efficiency. That's attained through higher levels of insulation, air tightness, high-efficiency heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVAC), and the like.

However, a true green home is not only energy-efficient. It also uses less water, incorporates renewable energy, is built from material with a low impact on the environment and indoor air quality, and includes good storm and grey water management.

Some green certifications also take into account factors like waste recycling during construction and a home's proximity to public transit.

In the end, all energy-efficient features and elements work together to lower energy consumption, reduce greenhouse gases and shrink a homeowner's carbon footprint.

If you are considering buying or building a green home, the following will provide a primer on the most popular green certification programs. An existing home can be renovated using the principles of any one of these programs.

Costs for meeting the standards of each program vary depending on factors ranging from location of the home to your choice of contractors and suppliers.

Ultimately, a truly meaningful green certification program is a combination of small things like a rain barrel to collect water, light dimmers and a smart thermostat, as well as major items like high-efficiency HVAC and a high-performance building envelope.

Speaking personally, I am fortunate to have lived in a R-2000* home since 1998. I continue to upgrade this home year after year to be more sustainable. Should I ever build another home for my family, it will combine the principles of Passive Home, Net Zero and LEED for Home.

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ENERGY STAR for New Homes. Homes built to this standard are on average 20% more energy-efficient than those built to just the current building code. That means less energy to operate your home and savings on utility bills. ENERGY STAR-qualified homes typically feature high-efficiency heating and cooling systems; a heat recovery ventilation system (HVR); walls and ceilings insulated beyond the building code; high-performance ENERGY STAR windows, patio doors and skylights; and a variety of ENERGY STAR products such as lighting, appliances and air conditioners. (www.energystar.gc.ca)

R-2000* Homes built to the new R-2000 Standard are on average 50 per cent more energy-efficient than those built to code. These best-in-class, energy-efficient homes include high levels of insulation; energy-efficient windows, doors, and HVAC systems; whole-house ventilation; and measures to protect the environment. They are also tested to ensure minimal air leakage. The result: energy savings, increased comfort and a healthier environment for the family. (<https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/efficiency/homes/20575>)

• **NET ZERO** (NZE) These homes produce as much energy as they consume on an annual basis. The energy is generated on-site and renewable (solar panels are a common way to do this), and both passive and thermal energy are acceptable. Gas and electrical base loads, which may be necessary in some cases, can also be factored into NZE annual energy calculations. A NZE Ready (NZER) home is one where the renewables have not yet been installed. (<https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/efficiency/housing>)

LEED CANADA FOR HOMES This certification uses criteria in eight categories: site selection, water efficiency, materials and resources, energy and atmosphere, indoor environmental quality, location and linkages, awareness and education, and innovation. All LEED-certified homes must meet 19 mandatory measures and a minimum set of optional measures, all of which are verified on-site by a third-party verification team. LEED has four levels of certification: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum. (<https://www.cagbc.org/greenhomes>)

PASSIVE A Passive House is recognized internationally as the proven best way to build for comfort, affordability and energy efficiency in residential, institutional and commercial buildings. It must meet rigid design requirements governing space heating, energy demand and air tightness. A Passive House must also meet thermal comfort standards for all living areas in both summer and winter. (<https://www.passivehousecanada.com>)

HERS The home energy rating systems (HERS) is an American standard by which a home's energy use is measured. It is also the national recognized system for inspecting and calculating a home's energy performance. (<http://www.hersindex.com>)

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