

Homebuyer's Checklist

Below is a more detailed list of building features for those who really want to investigate their house. To really see how some of these measures are installed, visit houses that are under construction.

MEASURE	Building America	Builder #1	Builder #2	Builder #3
HEATING AND COOLING EQUIPMENT				
ENERGY STAR qualified air conditioning of SEER* 13 or greater	Yes			
ENERGY STAR qualified heat pump	Yes			
ENERGY STAR qualified boiler	Yes			
ENERGY STAR qualified furnace of AFUE* 90	Yes			
ENERGY STAR qualified programmable thermostat	Yes			
Ductwork sealed with mastic (no duct tape)	Yes			
5% or less duct leakage found with pressure test	Yes			
Duct Insulation: R-4 in conditioned space, R-8 in attic, R-6 in crawlspace	Yes			
House plans show duct layouts	Yes			
Ducts located in conditioned space as much as possible	Yes			
Ducts sized according to industry standards in Manual D	Yes			
Heating and cooling equipment sized according to industry standards in Manual J	Yes			
House pressure balanced with jump ducts	Yes			
HVAC* equipment and duct work was inspected and tested after installation	Yes			
INSULATION <i>(take a look at a house under construction before sheetrock is installed)</i>				
Insulation installed behind tubs, landings, and other hard to reach places	Yes			
Insulation fills entire cavities – no voids or compressed batts – Attic insulation level without gaps and covers entire attic floor	Yes			
High density batt insulation	Yes			
Rim joists are insulated	Yes			
WINDOWS <i>(take a look at a house under construction before exterior siding is installed)</i>				
ENERGY STAR qualified windows, doors, and skylights	Yes			
Windows flashed to help repel water	Yes			
Windows rated to 0.35 U-factor and SHGC – greater SHGC would be allowable for passive solar heated homes	Yes			

APPENDIX I: HOMEBUYER'S CHECKLIST

MOISTURE MANAGEMENT <i>(take a look at a house under construction before exterior siding is installed)</i>				
Ground slopes away from house	Yes			
Housewrap or building paper covers exterior sheathing in wood framed houses	Yes			
Roof flashing in valleys, where walls and roofs intersect, and at other places where water may enter the house – the more complex the roof, the more flashing you should see	Yes			
Overhangs for shade and to direct water away from walls	Yes			
AIR BARRIERS				
All penetrations through exterior walls sealed	Yes			
Careful sealing of sheetrock or exterior sheathing	Yes			
Canned lights rated as airtight and for insulated ceiling (ICAT)	Yes			
Electrical boxes on exterior walls caulked or gasketed	Yes			
Holes into attic sealed	Yes			
Attic hatch weather-stripped and insulated	Yes			
Air leakage determined with house depressurization test	Yes			
Wall-roof intersection carefully sealed to avoid ice dams	Yes			
Draft stops installed behind tubs, showers, stairs, and fireplaces	Yes			
FOUNDATION MEASURES				
Radon control measures installed	Yes			
4 to 6 inch gravel base under slab and basement floors	Yes			
Polyethylene (plastic) vapor barrier between gravel and slab	Yes			
Conditioned crawlspace	Yes			
Exterior wall insulation	Yes			
PLUMBING				
No pipes in exterior walls	Yes			
Pipe insulation	Yes			
YOUR FEATURES FOR COMPARISON				

- *SEER: *Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio*
- *AFUE: *Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency*
- *HVAC: *heating, ventilation, and air conditioning*

If you want to know more about any of these or other house features review the other chapters of the *Best Practices* guide. Other chapters are designed to help site planners, designers, site supervisors, and crafts people design and build efficient, comfortable, and durable homes.