

National Association of Home Builders



Modular Building Systems

Your dream home: Built fast, built green



NAHB Building
Systems Councils

www.nahb.org/Modular



What is a Modular Home?

A modular home is built in one or more sections in a factory, then transported and installed on a permanent foundation at the home site. Modular homes are designed and constructed to meet all state and local building codes of your home's final location.

Quality Construction

- Unlike a conventionally built home, which is assembled onsite piece by piece and is exposed to the elements throughout the entire process, modular homes are constructed in segments called "modules" in protected, climate-controlled facilities. Skilled craftsmen build each module using high-tech machinery and precise methods, significantly reducing the amount of onsite construction time.

Built Strong

- Built to tolerate the rigors of ground transportation and being lifted into place by a crane, modular homes are typically built to stronger standards than conventional homes, which also makes them better withstand the forces of nature.

Careful Delivery

- Once the modules of your new home are constructed in the factory, complete with walls, floor, ceiling, wiring, plumbing, and interior fixtures, they are carefully transported to your home site and gently and securely placed on a permanent foundation by a crane.

Fast Finish

- Modular construction shrinks the building schedule significantly. Depending on the size of your new home, it could be fully set onsite and weathertight in as little as one day. Your local builder will do final finish work. Many owners are able to move into their homes just months after they make initial contact with their modular home builder.

Resources

Watch a modular home come together:
www.nahb.org/ModularVideo

Find a manufacturer serving your area:
www.nahb.org/ModularDirectory

View a gallery of homes at:
www.hbi.org/ModularHomesPhotos

For more information, visit or call:
www.nahb.org/Modular
1-800-368-5242 x8576



Benefits of Modular Building Systems

Speed of Construction

- Modular construction allows for a quick turnaround between groundbreaking and occupancy. Custom modular homes are built in a fraction of the time a comparable custom site-built home could be constructed.
- Thanks to the high levels of expertise and experience of a manufacturer's building crew, once all the materials arrive at the factory, a home's modules can be assembled in as little as a single day. Typically, a two-story, 2,500 square-foot home can be constructed in a factory in less than two weeks.
- Individual modules can be up to 90 percent complete when shipped from the factory to the home site. All walls, flooring, ceilings, stairs, and other structural components are completed in the factory before shipping. Most manufacturers even install carpeting and prime/paint the walls before the home is delivered to the site.
- Because most work is done in the factory, weather delays, missing materials, and subcontractor no-shows are all but eliminated, saving time and money.

Design Flexibility

- While most modular home manufacturers have an extensive portfolio of home plans to choose from, computer-assisted design (CAD) allows for design and customization possibilities when planning your new modular home.
- Your customizations are addressed at the factory, ensuring your custom home design is built accurately and precisely.

Quality Control

- Building homes in a factory setting allows for more consistent quality due to uniform construction processes, training techniques, and routine inspections.
- All homes are inspected by an independent, third-party home inspection agency before leaving the factory. Additionally, once onsite, they can be inspected again, this time by a local building inspector.

Energy Efficiency

- Modular homes are often more tightly built and thus more energy efficient, resulting in lower heating and cooling costs for the homeowner.



Modular Homes Are Environmentally Sound

Modular homes are green by their very nature. Assembly in an enclosed manufacturing facility allows them to fulfill some key components of green building standards.

- Waste of material at the factory and the job site is reduced.
- The waste and byproducts that *are* produced during modular home construction often are recycled or even converted to fuel that heats the factory.
- With the bulk of a modular home's materials delivered at once, fuel is conserved and emissions can be reduced, potentially lowering the home's carbon footprint.
- Because modular homes don't require a large staging area environmental impact on the land and the community where the house is being delivered is minimized.
- The tighter a home is built, the more energy efficient it is. The modular construction process allows for easier identification and filling of gaps around pipes, electrical outlets, windows, doors, and exterior sheathing, resulting in less air infiltration and improved efficiency from your HVAC.
- Plumbers, electricians, and other subcontractors don't have to travel to multiple job sites because most of their work is done in the factory. Less travel conserves gas and cuts air pollution.
- Many modular-home manufacturers are employing low-VOC caulks, glues, and paints (to improve indoor-air quality) as well as using recycled building materials and environmentally sound techniques in the homes they build so they are in compliance with the NAHB's National Green Building Standard.



How to Get Started

Find a Manufacturer

Go to www.nahb.org/ModularDirectory for a full list of modular companies who belong to the National Association of Home Builders' Modular Building Systems Council.

Contact a Builder

Most modular manufacturers market and sell their homes through local builders or developers who will work with you throughout the process—from design through lot selection, site preparation, and finish work. The manufacturer can direct you to the nearest builder serving your area.

Choose a Building Site

- You may already own your ideal home site. Your home can be designed to complement the lot size, topography, and surrounding homes.
- If you do not already own land, you can select a site that will meet your needs. With the increasing interest in modular construction, there are sites available in existing subdivisions or neighborhoods where your modular home can be constructed.

Apply for Financing

- As mortgage lenders better educate themselves as to the structural soundness and inherent benefits of modular home construction, financing has become more readily available for qualified borrowers. Some may even have departments or divisions specific to modular home financing. Although the process may vary slightly from company to company, many new modular home loans are construction-to-permanent loans that follow a general template similar to any new home purchase.
- During construction, the borrower will typically make interest-only payments to the lender on the funds as they are disbursed. Modular building saves money, because the construction time frame is reduced, resulting in fewer interest-only payments on your loan.



Design Your Home

- Your builder will help with floor plan selection or assist with customizing a home to your needs and lifestyle. You will have the opportunity to select from an array of upgrades and options to personalize your new home.

Watch It Being Built

- Many builders and manufacturers encourage new modular home buyers to visit their manufacturing facilities. Doing so will give you the opportunity to see firsthand the quality craftsmanship and efficiency of modular construction. If the timing works out, you may even be able to watch your new modular home being built right in front of your eyes.



Beyond Single-Family Homes

- Modular construction isn't just for building single family homes. Modular manufacturers can complete nearly any multifamily or light commercial project conceivable, including traditional brick town houses, condominiums, mid-rise apartment complexes, school buildings, offices, and more.
- This versatile construction type even makes remodeling, adding on, or a complete razing faster and easier.
- A factory-controlled construction setting means that weather-related site delays are virtually eliminated; plus it provides for an extra measure of quality control in regards to materials and craftsmanship.
- A modular building's systems, such as plumbing, electrical, and HVAC, are installed by experts within the factory, significantly reducing the reliance on subcontracted labor and its associated costs.
- Modular construction creates less material waste and site disturbance than conventional construction does—both of which can save money and the environment.
- Builders in tight urban surroundings can work with modulares with ease. Modular construction requires a fraction of the staging area needed by site-framed techniques. And modular buildings go up fast, so street closures and other disruptions to the neighborhood can be brief.
- When time and cost-control are of the essence, and quality construction matters, modular technology delivers.



About the Council

The Modular Building Systems Council—part of the National Association of Home Builders—is America’s resource for modular construction. From connecting manufacturers with customers to helping builders convert to modular construction, the council has a wealth of information and experience with modular housing.

The Modular Building Systems Council is one of NAHB’s Building Systems Councils, which represents the systems-built housing industry across the country.



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