

Questions To Ask

So you want to know more about the homes you're looking at than the usual list of size, price and features? You might be interested in a high-performing home? How can you find out more?

This sheet suggests questions that will help you compare the homes and builders you're considering. The questions are based on topics covered in more detail in the "Colorado New Home Choices" series of fact sheets. These fact sheets are available through the organizations that provided this brochure or on the Web at www.ColoradoNewHomeChoices.org.

Fact Sheet Topic	Importance	Key Issues	Question For Your Builder
Whole-House Approach	Affordably delivers better comfort and healthier indoor air while reducing future maintenance needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More communication among designers and construction team • Performance goals • Energy analysis • Potential problem areas carefully detailed 	What steps have you taken to ensure that the individual parts of the house work well together as a system?
Quality Control	Identifying and solving problems before the home is purchased avoids frustration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear standards • Visual inspections during construction • Performance testing on completed home 	What procedures are used to ensure quality construction and performance for this house?
Solar-Smart Design	Designing with the sun in mind reduces energy bills and creates better comfort in all seasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House orientation • Window placement and shading • Option to add solar system now or in the future 	How was the sun considered in the design of this house?
Windows	High-performance windows improve year-round comfort while reducing condensation and energy bills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Low-e" coatings • "Solar-control" coatings • Quality basement windows 	Do all windows have low-e or solar-control coatings?
Insulation	A great insulation package provides better comfort in all seasons and lower energy bills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate amounts of insulation • Insulated foundation • Careful installation 	How can I be assured that insulation was installed to deliver its rated performance?
Tight Construction	A tightly built home gives more control over energy use, comfort and health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tightly built shell • Controlled ventilation • Attention to detail • Testing 	How do you balance tight construction and the need for fresh air in this house?
Foundations	A carefully designed foundation will be warm and dry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water management • Insulation • Tight construction 	What steps have you taken to ensure the basement stays warm and dry?

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Exterior Water Management	Keeping water out of the home avoids mold and water-related maintenance problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper drainage details for site, roof, walls, foundation • Special attention to deep crawl spaces 	What steps have been taken to keep exterior water out of the home?
Indoor Moisture Management	Providing high enough humidity for comfort without damaging the building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight construction • Effective humidification and ventilation control • Humidity gauge 	How will I be able to control moisture levels in the home?
Healthy Indoor Air	Clean, fresh air 24 hours a day is vital to good health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight construction • Materials and equipment that create few pollutants • Controlled ventilation 	How is healthy, fresh air assured in this house?
Combustion Safety	Exhaust fumes from natural gas and propane appliances can make you very sick.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Closed-combustion” or “power-vented” appliances • Vented range hoods over gas ovens • Combustion safety testing 	Will all combustion products be safely vented outdoors under all conditions?
Summer Cooling Choices	Many approaches to summer comfort are much less expensive than air conditioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar-smart design • Solar-control windows • Efficient lighting and appliances • Simple cooling equipment 	Will this house be comfortable during the summer without a large air conditioner?
Forced-Air Heating and Cooling Equipment	Equipment that has been properly sized and installed lasts longer and provides better comfort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate load calculations • Minimal oversizing • Testing and adjustment of installed equipment 	Are test results available for the heating and cooling equipment as it has been installed in this home?
Forced-Air Heating and Cooling Ductwork	Ductwork details affect your comfort and the operation of the heating and cooling equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properly sized ductwork • Careful installation • Duct sealing and insulation • Testing 	What steps have been taken to ensure that each room receives the amount of conditioned air it needs to stay comfortable?
Appliances	Appliance energy use is a growing part of the typical energy bill. Easy choices keep those costs under control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENERGY STAR® appliances • Standby power use 	How do the builder-supplied appliances compare with ENERGY STAR® standards?
Lighting	More thought toward lighting details can provide a more pleasant home and smaller electric bills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daylighting • Electric lighting design • Efficient lighting fixtures 	How was energy efficiency considered in the lighting design for this house?

Visit the following Web site for more information: www.ColoradoNewHomeChoices.org