

Buying a manufactured or mobile home?

One of the most important things to consider when buying a home is energy efficiency. Oddly enough, it's not usually something people ask about.

This quick guide lists things to look for when shopping for a manufactured home.

Most importantly, remember, just because it's a new home doesn't mean it is energy efficient. Little details add up to energy dollars spent...and saved!



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BUYING GUIDE FOR

Manufactured & Mobile Homes

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What is the first rule of thumb when buying a manufactured home?

You have to ask the right questions. Salesmen have many models that look great and fit into your budget. But, before looking at carpets and kitchen size, consider the things that aren't as visible:

- **Attic insulation levels**
- **Doors and windows**
- **Heating and cooling**

Basically, we're talking about all the things that — combined with the weather, determine your monthly utility bills. If you're looking at a home that meets MINIMUM energy efficiency levels, your utility bills will be higher!

So what do you ask the salesman to show you?

Start with these five elements before you get into carpets and kitchens. Take this brochure with you. If they don't have a model in stock to meet these standards, it can be ordered. You'll be glad you did when utility bills arrive.

5 THINGS TO ASK THE SALESMAN

1. SPECIFY THAT THE HOME MUST HAVE AN ENERGY-EFFICIENT HEAT PUMP.

In most cases, a heat pump can be added to homes sitting on the lot. Typically, the heat pump can save up to 50 percent on heating costs and cost less to cool as well. Look at the SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) rating; the higher the number is, the better. MLEC recommends 15 SEER or higher to help you get the most for your energy dollar.

2. SPECIFY HIGHER INSULATION LEVELS IN CEILINGS, WALLS AND FLOORS.

Requesting R30 in the ceiling, R13 in the wall and R22 in the floor may sound like mumble-jumble. But, it keeps hot air in during the winter, and cool air in during the summer. And, that makes perfect "cents." Simply put, it keeps you from heating or cooling Mother Nature.

3. TAKE A LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE; THAT IS, YOUR WINDOWS.

Like it or not, glass is not a good insulator, which basically means heat travels through windows even when they are closed. Single-pane windows are the least energy efficient. Storm

windows are better. Double-pane windows are best. Although they cost a little more up front, they'll save you month to month by helping save energy dollars.

4. SKIRTING FOR YOUR HOME IS A DEFINITE "YES."

It makes your place look nicer, while keeping pipes a little warmer in the winter. It also reduces air leaks around plumbing and electrical connections. All that adds up to higher comfort and lower utility bills. Also, specify that the home is set on a good, solid foundation. It will be less likely to settle.

5. A DOOR IS A DOOR, RIGHT? WRONG.

Insulated core or storm doors save energy. More importantly, they reduce cold spots and drafts. It may seem like a small thing, but it means more comfort and more savings over time.

