

# ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY CONSTRUCTION

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That is one of the findings in a survey conducted in late 2007 by Public Opinion Strategies for the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB). The survey also indicated that among those who said they would pay more for a home with green features, fully 74 percent said they would be willing to pay no more than an additional 10 percent, highlighting the need to keep green building affordable.

One of NAHB's seven categories of Green building is indoor air quality. Residential Systems Magazines agrees, and identifies energy efficiency as another "hallmark of the green building movement."

According to Steve Alfaro, trade business development manager for VELUX America, both indoor air quality and energy efficiency can be enhanced with venting skylights. He says that they admit natural light from above to reduce energy costs and exhaust volatile organic compounds (VOCs), while transforming living areas into bright spaces.

"In bathrooms especially," Alfaro says, "venting skylights reduce condensation build-up while providing a beautiful view of the sky above, without affording anyone the opportunity to see in. You get privacy plus the use of wall space, where a window isn't necessary, for decorating, storage, or another form of space utilization."

"And," Alfaro says, "while homeowners are considering skylights, they should know venting skylights in the kitchen can release hot air and odors, lessening the need for energy-consuming mechanical ventilation, while providing better light for brighter days and more pleasant cooking and dining."

Alfaro says that studies show skylights admit 30 percent more light than vertical windows in dormers, and provide the drama of a sky view that can't be achieved with vertical windows. "And skylights, whether fixed or venting, which can be fitted with a variety of interior or exterior sunscreening accessories, offer much more privacy than vertical windows," he says. There are also skylights available with electrochromic glass that can be tinted electronically by remote control to control light and heat gain while still providing the view to the sky. Even without accessories skylight glazings are among the best in the fenestration industry. ENERGY STAR® qualified units employ double-pane construction with argon gas injected low-E dual panes for control of heat gain or loss. Quality glazings control up to 83 percent of the sun's fade-causing rays and resist condensation so well that a home can contain up to 50 percent more humidity before condensation will occur. These units contain tempered and laminated panes for safety and maximum protection against fading. There are also impact glass models available that meet the strictest code requirements for wind-borne debris protections in hurricane-prone and other high-wind areas.

Alfaro adds that modern skylights make one of the biggest fears of homeowners, leaks, a thing of the past. "Quality units offer separate, pre-engineered flashing kits for shingles, tile or metal roofing materials," he says. "They are designed and engineered to prevent leaks over the full life of a roof and, properly installed, simply don't leak."

For free information on the benefits of natural light and skylight selection, or for free house plans incorporating skylights, call 1-800-283-2831 or visit [veluxusa.com](http://www.veluxusa.com). For government information on window and skylight energy efficiency visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov), and for independent agency information visit [nsrc.org](http://nsrc.org) or [efficientwindows.org](http://efficientwindows.org).

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