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EPA Announces New Guidelines for Energy Star Homes

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WASHINGTON - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing new, more rigorous guidelines for new homes that earn the Energy Star label. Compared to the current Energy Star guidelines, the new requirements will make qualified new homes at least 20 percent more efficient than homes built to the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) – slashing utility bills for qualified homes by 15 percent compared to IECC code-built homes.

The updated requirements will ensure that the government's Energy Star label continues to deliver a significant increase in energy efficiency over homes that are built to code and standard builder business practices. These guidelines will go into effect in January 2011, although some builders may choose to adopt the new requirements earlier.

Key elements of the new guidelines for Energy Star qualified homes include:

- **A Complete Thermal Enclosure System:** Comprehensive air sealing, properly insulated assemblies and high-performance windows enhance comfort, improve durability and reduce utility bills.
- **Quality Installed Complete Heating and Cooling Systems:** High-efficiency heating and cooling systems engineered to deliver more comfort, moisture control and quiet operation, and equipped with fresh-air ventilation to improve air quality.
- **A Complete Water Management System:** Because Energy Star homes offer a tightly-sealed and insulated building envelope, a comprehensive package of flashing, moisture barriers, and heavy-duty membrane details is critical to help keep water from roofs, walls, and foundations for improved durability and indoor air quality.
- **Efficient Lighting and Appliances:** Look for Energy Star qualified lighting, appliances and fans helping to further reduce monthly utility bills and provide high-quality performance.
- **Third-Party Verification:** Energy Star qualified homes require verification by independent Home Energy Raters who conduct a comprehensive series of detailed inspections and use specialized diagnostic equipment to test system performance.

More information about Energy Star qualified homes: <http://www.energystar.gov>

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