

# Choose the greenest builder available

As building codes enforce tightened minimum standards for eco-responsibility, the more progressive builders are illustrating their own accountability by using and producing materials that are even more efficient than mandates demand.

This is great news if you are currently designing, planning or simply getting ready to buy a new home -- your investment will likely deliver greater environmental conservation, lower occupant costs and increased property value.

Building code revisions worldwide are ushering a whole new generation of structures that are between 35 and 40 percent more environmentally responsible. The improved practices in construction are showcasing advancements in wall building, windows, insulation and air-infiltration.

"Switching from

wood-framing to concrete walls, for example, has so many spin-off benefits," explains Natalie Rodgers of Nudura, the manufacturer of an advanced building method called the insulated concrete form (ICF). "Solid, air-tight concrete walls would initially lower your energy bills. You'll live in a stronger, more comfortable home while the investment grows in resale value. As importantly, your home would create far lower demand on natural resources."

Designed like Lego, the interlocking Nudura forms are designed with monolithic concrete sandwiched between two continuous layers of expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam.

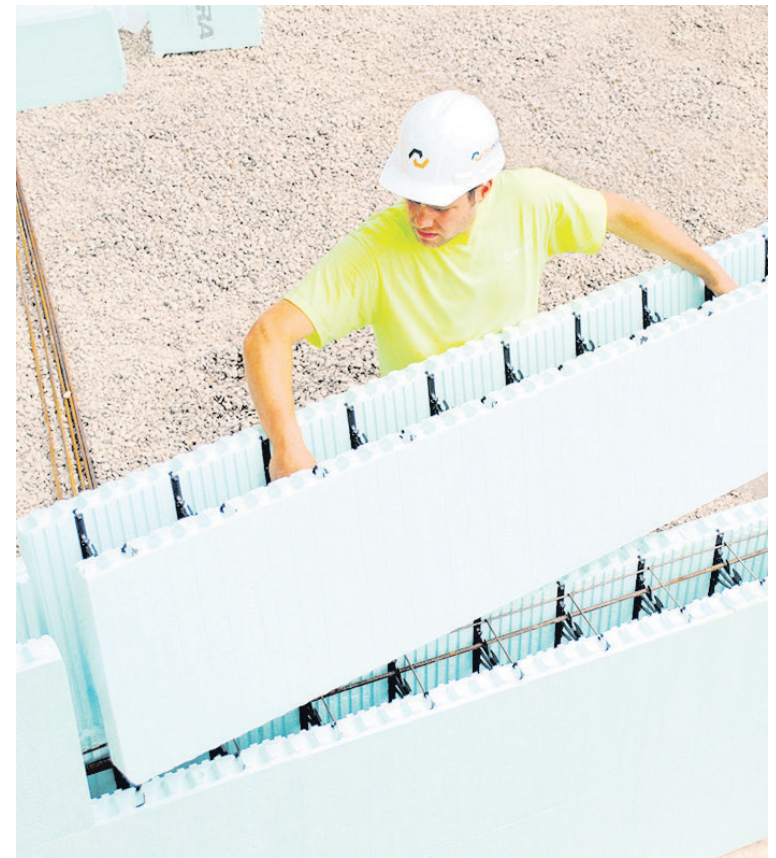
"The foam material isolates the concrete and significantly reduces the flow of heat through the wall," says Rodgers. "It stabilizes the internal temperature

from day to night fluctuations and provides a largely self-regulating environment. This faster method of construction creates one solid concrete wall."

As a result, you will need less energy for mechanical heating and cooling, delivering cost savings throughout the year. A home built with this concrete system is stronger, provides greater safety, offers greater sound and fire resistance, and would be far less prone to mold, cold spots and drafts.

"Benefits are plentiful to builders, too," says Rodgers. "The patented hinged web allows the forms to fold flat, requiring smaller shipping space and less manpower than other methods."

If you want your builder to use insulated concrete forms, be sure to make the request well before construction gets underway.



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