



Planning Division

City of San Rafael

Community Development
Department

P.O. Box 151560
San Rafael, CA 94915-1560

(415) 485-3085

(415) 485-3184

planning@ci.san-rafael.ca.us

www.cityofsanrafael.org

Introduction

New building construction and the operation and maintenance of buildings consume a great deal of our natural resources and contribute to carbon emissions. However, many new building techniques and building materials have been developed which can significantly reduce these impacts. The City of San Rafael is committed to “green building.”

Green building strives to reduce energy consumption, use materials which conserve resources, reduce site impacts, conserve water and improve indoor air quality. Green building can result in long-term cost savings through lower utility costs and health benefits through better air quality.

What is Required of New Residential Construction?

New dwelling units (single-family, duplex or multi-family) are required to select from a wide range of “green” building techniques and material choices.

New construction must achieve at least 60 points on the Green Points rating system, which is used in many jurisdictions in the Bay Area. Applicants should review the Green Building Guidelines for either Single-family or Multi-family to learn about the green building options available and their associated point levels. Copies of the Green Building Guidelines and the Green Points calculator are available in the Community Development Department, Third Floor of City Hall, or can be found on-line at www.cityofsanrafael.org. A great deal of information about Green Points and green building resources can be found at: www.builditgreen.org.

Applicants will be required to have a Certified Green Points Rater review the proposed construction plans to tally the proposed green building features, and either complete the Green Points form or verify its accuracy. The Green Points form must be submitted as part of the building permit application, and construction plans must call-out the proposed green building features. It is highly recommended that the Certified Green Points Rater be involved early in the project design when it is much easier to plan for green building techniques and material choices. A list of local Certified Green Points Raters is available at the Community Development Department or on-line.

Following submittal and approval of your building permit, the Certified Green Points Rater must verify during construction that the proposed green building features are incorporated into the new project. Prior to requesting your final inspection, the Certified Green Points Rater will have to complete a form verifying that the Green Points have been achieved. In addition, new single-family homes which exceed 3,500 square feet of conditioned space or additions to single-family homes which will result in a home size over 3,500 square feet of conditioned space must also comply with a City ordinance which requires greater energy efficiency.

Under state building codes, new construction must meet the energy efficiency requirements of Title 24 of the California Building Code. The City of San Rafael requires that homes over 3,500 square feet must meet the Title 24 requirements equal to a home of 3,500 square feet. The larger the home size is over 3,500 square feet, the greater the energy efficiency requirements. Your contractor, architect or consultant who is familiar with Title 24 calculations required for building permits will complete a modified Title 24 form indicating compliance with the City’s ordinance requirements.

After August, 2007, new wood-burning fireplaces are no longer allowed to be installed in San Rafael due to air quality impacts. Fireplaces with wood-burning EPA Phase II certified inserts are allowed, as are fireplaces with gas log inserts. New wood stoves must be EPA Phase II certified units. If you are remodeling a room which contains a wood stove that is not EPA Phase II certified, you will be required to remove the non-compliant wood stove.



What is Required of New Non-Residential (Commercial, Industrial, Institutional) Construction?

New construction which is 5,000 square feet of conditioned space or greater must include green building techniques and materials as defined by the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), a nationally recognized rating system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. New construction between 5,000 and 29,999 square feet of conditioned space must achieve a “Certified” rating using the latest version of LEED for New Construction (available at the Community Development Department, on the City’s website at www.cityofsanrafael.org or at the U.S. Green Building Council’s website at www.usgbc.org.)

New construction of at least 30,000 square feet of conditioned space must meet the LEED “Silver” rating. Applicants will be required to submit a LEED Checklist completed by a LEED Accredited Professional as part of their building permit submittals. A listing of LEED Accredited Professionals can be found at www.usgbc.org. It is highly recommended that the project design team utilize the services of a LEED Accredited Professional from the outset to help evaluate green building options.

For construction projects between 5,000 and 29,999 square feet of conditioned space, the LEED Accredited Professional must verify inclusion of the required green building components in the project prior to final inspection and issuance of a certificate of occupancy. For construction projects of 30,000+ square feet of conditioned space, the project must obtain LEED Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Do City Buildings Have to Meet the Same Green Building Requirements?

Yes, absolutely.

Are There Any Incentives Available?

Yes! The City offers the following to residential projects that achieve at least 100 Green Points or non-residential projects that achieve at least a LEED Gold rating:

- Expedited building permit plan check (typically 2 week turnaround).
- Reimbursement for the cost of the Green Point Rater services (residential project only, limited to a maximum of \$1,000)
- Provision of a bronze plaque for building mounting, identifying the project as meeting the City’s Emerald Green Building level
- Provision of a City Green Building logo for construction signage
- Listing of the building on the City’s website

In addition, the County of Marin offers rebates for photovoltaic and solar hot water systems and EPA-Certified wood stoves. You should also check for potential rebates from PG&E (www.pge.com), the California Solar Initiative (www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov) and the Marin Municipal Water District (www.marinwater.org).

On Line Resources

Green Building:

Build It Green- www.builditgreen.org

U.S. Green Building Council
www.usgbc.org

Sustainable Living:

County of Marin
www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/CD/Main/index.cfm

Rebates:

PG&E -www.pge.com/res/rebates

MMWD -www.marinwater.org

Green Retailers and Services:

www.greenbiz.abag.ca.gov/ShopGreenMarin.html#buildorgs