

# EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS

The advantages of buying a newly constructed home

By Louie Morizio, Geranium

**T**he frigid temperatures we experienced in late December through early January bring sharply into focus the many advantages of owning a newly built home – among them a comfortable indoor environment in a house designed to withstand extreme weather conditions.

The Ontario Building Code (OBC) lays out stringent criteria that builders in the province have to meet. Included are minimum requirements for items such as insulation, airtightness, HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) systems and many other elements that also contribute to sustaining the life of the home itself.

With advances in materials, technology and construction techniques, it's important to the homeowners that builders offer the finest and most energy-efficient new homes. To ensure this practice, OBC, which is administered by the Building and Development Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, is reviewed and updated every five to seven years. Occasionally, amendments are made between reviews to accommodate specific advancements in building and energy requirements.

Today's walls, ceilings, windows and doors are designed to minimize the effects of the outside climate on the interior temperature of the home while also providing more energy efficiency than ever before. Increases to the minimum R-value for insulation by the OBC (the higher the R-value, the greater the insulating effectiveness) ultimately lowers the cost to heat and cool a home, and results in a more comfortable indoor environment. In a Geranium-built home, we also use upgraded foam insulation



that is sprayed in place to fill gaps around exterior pipes and hard to heat areas where cold can penetrate.

You may have seen homes under construction, or under renovation, where a weather-resistive barrier or home wrap has been installed. This product is a breathable membrane that acts as a superior air barrier to protect against drafts and condensation.

New homes require experts to design the HVAC systems, and the calculations are done precisely for the size and building components of each home. Today's furnaces are highly effective and the OBC ensures a minimum efficiency.

If you are among the many who will be shopping for a home this year, there's a strong case to be made for buying new, of which this article only addresses one aspect. It is also wise to ask about the builder's construction approach and whether they build to

minimum OBC standards, or aim higher, as Geranium does.

Compared to the homes of decades ago, new homes offer more comfort and efficiency, especially important during our Ontario winters. Focusing on the behind-the-wall building practices ensures built-in value, in essence future proofing homes and protecting our homebuyers' investments. To learn more about construction techniques, visit [Geranium.com](http://Geranium.com) and view our Construction & Craftsmanship video.



**Louie Morizio**, is vice president, housing for Geranium and a Director of

RESCON. Since 1977, Geranium has built more than 8,000 homes in fine neighbourhoods and communities throughout Ontario.

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