

FSC Certified Wood

Category	Energy	M&R	IAQ
Cost	=	\$	\$\$ \$\$\$
Availability	1	2	3

Lumber in Residential Construction

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FSC Lumber Certification

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Description

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a nongovernmental organization that promotes standards for sustainable forestry certification worldwide and accredits forestry certifiers. FSC principles include management for biological diversity, long-term forest health and long-term economic well-being of local communities.

FSC tracks and monitors wood throughout the chain-of-custody—as it moves from harvesting to manufacturing and distribution and finally to the point of sale—to ensure that the customer is actually getting a certified sustainably harvested product.

FSC authorizes third-party certifying organizations to carry out certification. In the United States, these organizations are SmartWood and Scientific Certification Systems (SCS). These groups certify forest lands and chain-of-custody forest products based on FSC standards.

What makes it 'green'?

FSC certification guarantees that forests are managed in a way that will assure the long-term availability of wood while protecting the health of forests and the natural resources they contain and support.

Materials Cost

FSC-certified hardwoods are easier to find and more affordable than FSC-certified softwoods. FSC softwood prices are generally higher than noncertified

lumber, while FSC hardwoods are generally about the same price.

Availability

FSC-certified, salvaged, or reclaimed lumber is available in the Bay Area at select retailers only. Tell your lumberyard you want them to carry FSC certified lumber.

FSC lumber is now available in framing dimensions (2x4 through 2x12), as plywood, and as other engineered wood products. It is important to coordinate with suppliers in advance to ensure availability and secure the best pricing.

FSC-certified hardwood (for cabinet faces and floors, for example) is more readily available and cost effective than FSC-certified softwood.



The Forest Stewardship Council logo. Look for this label to ensure that wood products come from well-managed forests.

Controversy

Lumber debate:

In general, most environmental groups agree that FSC certification is the most stringent certification method used to judge sustainably managed forests. Only FSC tracks the “chain-of-custody” of wood taken from certified forests. This ensures lumber labeled as FSC is not mixed with other lumber. Look for the chain-of-custody on lumber tags and receipts.

Resources

Bay Area Build It Green

www.build-green.org/guide has a searchable database that lists local suppliers of composite, salvaged, and FSC-certified decking products.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

Maintains online lists of certified forests and chain-of-custody suppliers:

Tel. (202) 467-8391

www.fsc.org

Metafore (formerly part of the Certified Forest Products Council)

Provides information about certification programs, and lists of certified forests and forest products:

Tel. (503) 224-2205

www.certifiedwood.org

The following independent certification organizations maintain online lists of certified forests and chain-of-custody suppliers:

- *Scientific Certification Systems*
(510) 452-8000
www.scs1.com
- *Smartwood*
(802) 434-5491
www.smartwood.org