



Resident Reporter

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How to buy a manufactured home Part I: Choosing a home

Buying a home may be the most expensive purchase you will ever make. A manufactured home may be an appealing option for you. These homes come in a variety of styles, sizes, and floor plans, and range in price from about \$30,000 to more than \$150,000 without land. Manufactured homes can be installed on your own land, in a rental community, or in a planned subdivision.



Manufactured homes are factory-built to meet the federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards also known as the HUD Code. The Code,

which is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), regulates the homes design and construction, strength and durability, transportability, fire resistance, and energy efficiency. It also sets performance standards for the heating, air conditioning, plumbing, thermal and electrical systems. If you have decided that a manufactured home is right for you, consider the following issues:

What Size Home and Floor Plan Do I Want?

Manufactured homes come in a variety of sizes and floor plans that include spacious living rooms, dining rooms, fully-equipped kitchens, bedrooms, family rooms, and utility areas. Depending on the size of your homesite, you can choose a single-section or larger multisection design. Homes range in size from 900 to 2,500 square feet and can be customized to meet your needs and preferences.

What Features Are Available?

The interior design of your home can include custom cabinets; walk-in closets; bathrooms with recessed tubs and whirlpools; and wood-burning fireplaces. Because most manufacturers use computer-assisted design, you'll have flexibility in choosing variations to floor plans and decor.



You can choose from a variety of exterior designs, depending on your taste and budget. Exterior siding comes in an array of colors and materials including metal, vinyl, wood and hardboard. Awnings, enclosures around the crawl space, patio covers, decks and steps also are available.

How Much Can I Expect to Pay For a Home?

Depending on the size, floor plans and features, a new home can cost anywhere from \$15,000 to more than \$100,000. This doesn't include the land.

What Financing Options Are Available?

Your retailer usually can provide information about financing. You can also check with lenders in your area. Just as there are choices when you buy a site-built home, there are a variety of financing options when you buy a manufactured home. Downpayments and loan terms are similar — 5 to 10 percent of the manufactured home's sales price, and loan terms from 15 to 30 years. Most lenders offer fixed and variable rate loans and most have programs that allow you to "buy the

Practical Information
for Residents of Manufactured
Home Communities

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rate down." If you own or plan to purchase the land where you will place your home, traditional mortgage financing can usually be arranged.

What Other Costs Can I Expect to Pay?

While your mortgage payment may be your biggest expense, you'll have other regular and periodic payments. They may include utilities, property taxes, land rental fees, insurance, routine maintenance, and other service fees such as water and sewer. Today's manufactured homes are built to meet new national energy standards set by HUD. The energy conserving features found in manufactured homes help reduce your monthly energy costs.

How Much Maintenance Will My Home Need?

Your homeowner's manual outlines maintenance requirements. It's important that they're followed. Failure to do so could void the warranty, as well as lessen the value and life of your home.

What Warranty Coverage Is Offered on the Home, Its Transportation, and Installation?

All manufacturers offer a written warranty that should cover:

- structural workmanship;
- factory-installed plumbing, heating and electrical systems; and
- factory-installed appliances, which also may be covered by separate appliance manufacturer warranties.

There are important differences among warranties. For example, manufacturer warranties usually do not cover installation (also called "set-up") and transportation of the

home, but you may be able to get this coverage through the retailer or installation contractor. Although you may never need such warranty services, it's a good idea to check the coverage on any warranties offered before you buy.

Where Can I Locate My Home?

Many homes are placed on privately owned property. If this option appeals to you, find out about zoning laws, restrictive covenants, and utility connections. Your retailer can give you more information.

Another option is to place your home in a land-lease community specifically designed for manufactured homes. Here, you own the home but lease the land. Placing your home in a land-lease community involves fewer siting considerations such as utility connections.

A third option is buying the home and land together in a planned subdivision where siting issues are handled by the developer.

May I Move My Home?

Yes, but it's not common to do so. The transportation of a home can place considerable stress on its structure and contents. Nevertheless, if you do plan to move your home at some future time, make sure you check with the appropriate state authorities about transportation and zoning regulations. States have restrictions on weight, size and width that may prevent you from moving your home. If you relocate, make sure you use a professional transporter. Never try to move the home yourself.

It's also important to check the data plate zone maps in your home. These maps tell you the wind, snow and thermal zones for which your home was constructed. Use them to determine if the new location is suitable for your home.



Special thanks to Manufactured Housing Institute and the Federal Trade Commission's Office of Consumer and Business Education. For more information please visit their website at: www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/homes/manufact/index.html