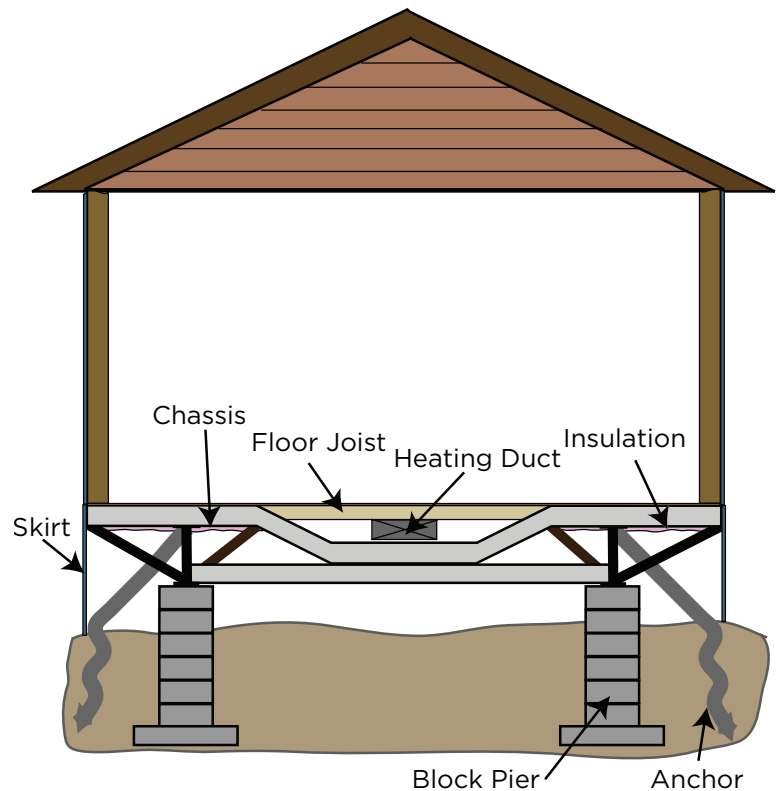


Manufactured Homes

A manufactured home is a home that is built in a factory and transported to a building lot where it is placed on piers or a foundation. Manufactured homes used to be known as “mobile homes” or “trailer homes.” These terms have faded away in favor of the term “manufactured homes.”

Manufactured homes are built on a non-removable steel frame chassis. The concept is that the entire home is built in the factory, on a chassis so that it can be rolled on its own wheels to the site. Theoretically it could be wheeled away again too. Why is this distinction important? If the home were not a complete unit but rather panels or modules that are assembled on site, the structure would have to be built in compliance with the local building code. The factory would have to build a slightly different model for each and every municipality across the country. Since the home is built as a complete and moveable unit, the factory can build the home to a single standard, the Federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards (the HUD Code). The factory can take advantage of the economies of scale.



If a garage or a deck or addition is added to the manufactured home, the local code applies.

The following factory built homes are NOT the same as “manufactured homes.” They are built in a factory but must comply with the local codes where the home will be located.

- **Modular home:** A modular home is a home that is built out of pieces that were manufactured in a factory. The sections are shipped from the factory to the building site and assembled like building blocks. Many modular homes have full basements and attached garages. In some cases they are indistinguishable from conventional site built homes.
- **Panelized home:** A panelized home is built from factory built panels. The panels are walls with windows, doors, plumbing and wiring already in them. The panels are transported to the site and assembled into a home.
- **Pre-cut homes:** Pieces of the home are cut to size in a factory to facilitate easy assembly on site. Log home building kits, for example, include all of the pieces pre-cut and ready to assemble on site.

Prior to June 1976, there was no federal standard for mobile homes. On this date the National Manufacture Housing Construction and Safety Standard was created (US Department of Housing and Urban Development or HUD). All manufactured homes in the United States must be built and inspected to this standard. A certifying plate on the exterior of the home indicates that the home was inspected and complies with the HUD Code. In 1980 the term mobile home was changed to manufactured home.

Single Section versus Multi Section

Years ago, most manufactured homes were single-section homes. They tended to be long and narrow, a necessity for transportation. Today most are multi section. That is two or more sections are towed to the site and placed together. Multi-section manufactured homes open up the possibilities for more interesting floor plans. The long narrow look is no longer required.

Recognizing Manufactured Homes

- Look for the metal certifying plate on the exterior. All manufactured homes since 1976 will have this. The plate will indicate that it was built and inspected in compliance with the HUD code.
- Look for a data plate indicating date of manufacture. This is often attached to the breaker panel or near the breaker panel. It may also be inside a kitchen cabinet or in a bedroom closet
- If you can see under the structure, you can identify the steel chassis, the towing tongue and perhaps where the wheels were attached when the unit was towed to the site.

