

CASE STUDY

Exceeding Code Requirements



PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT

The Baymont Townhome Community

BUILDER

Isola Homes

CONTRACTOR

Ekovate

LOCATION

Seattle, WA

RESULTS

Pre-leakage:

9.28 ACH₅₀ avg. per unit

Post-Leakage:

1.49 ACH₅₀ avg. per unit

Isola Homes Exceeds Code Requirements Using AeroBarrier

Isola Homes has built a successful business by making every one of its homes and townhomes environmentally friendly. The Seattle-area housing market has always been dense with homes and competitors marketing their own green housing. And compared to other markets nationwide, Seattle's homeowners are highly aware of green homebuilding, moving sustainability to their must-have lists.

These factors are what drive Matt Deveny, Isola Home's Vice President of Construction. Deveny is part of Isola Homes' constant, exacting focus on improving their homes in ways that exceed customer and code requirements to set the builder apart.

Contractors are Key in Reaching Green Goals

"Our homes must improve energy use by 20 percent over codes," said Deveny. "So Isola Homes works closely with contractors to find smarter ways to achieve project goals."

The 20 percent goal is part of the Built Green program. It certifies homes that exceed Washington's state and county building codes using a rating system. Isola Homes projects are designed to earn a four-star Built Green rating.



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Matt Deveny – Vice President of Construction
Isola Homes



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Matt Deveny
Isola Homes

The steps the builder was taking to achieve this rating included having contractors seal the drywall using caulk. This added step was proving problematic.

“The drywall contractors would sometimes forget the extra step,” said Deveny “We wound up assigning someone on our crew to police the work to make sure it got done and sometimes we even had to caulk around outlets and penetrations if we did not pass the blower door test.”

Making Air Sealing a Consistent, Reliable Process

Deveny turned to Tadashi Shiga for help finding a different solution. Shiga is owner of the energy rating and contractor firm Ekovate. They introduced AeroBarrier air sealing technology to Isola Homes as a way to eliminate this issue.

“We had to see it for ourselves to believe AeroBarrier was a viable option,” said Deveny. “Ekovate showed us the air sealing process at one of their projects. The ability to dial in tightness and to know you’ll pass the blower door test every time is why Isola Homes uses AeroBarrier.”

After Isola Homes began using AeroBarrier, the builder eliminated manual drywall sealing and also saw benefit in being able to schedule around air sealing – a now consistent process;

“Not passing the blower door test was more than an inconvenience,” said Deveny. “It slowed down the handoff to the homeowner. Making air sealing a consistently effective process made the blower door test a non-issue.”

Helping Homeowners See Benefit of Air Sealing

Isola Homes now uses AeroBarrier on 100 percent of its homes and markets this fact to potential homeowners. Its marketing team uses social media and simple, in-home signage to alert potential homebuyers it’s been air sealed.

In addition to signaling the extra steps Isola Homes takes to save energy, this also details the impact it has on the home’s comfort. In such a dense housing market, many of the builder’s townhomes are near street traffic. AeroBarrier’s ability to dampen sound makes for a quieter home. And without air from outdoors or the neighbors infiltrating the home, the home’s indoor air is also cleaner and healthier.

With its four-star Green Built homes making homeowners happy, Isola Homes is standing out from other builders. But like any successful business, their focus on regular process improvements will continue.