

CSA A277 vs NBC

A frequently asked question about the modular housing industry is what the difference is between the National Building Code (NBC) and the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) A277 certification program. The short answer is that there is no difference in the resulting product. The difference is in the certification process. Homes built on site can be inspected by local authorities while under construction to assure the municipality and the customer that it complies with the NBC requirements. Factory built homes may be built great distances from their final destination and therefore it would be time consuming and expensive for those responsible to assure compliance by travelling to the factory to do these inspections. This led to the development of the CSA A277 certification program for factory built buildings.

The CSA A277 certification standard is the program used in the modular housing industry in Canada. It is not a building code, but a quality control program run by the Standards Council of Canada through certified third party inspection agencies such as CSA, Intertek and Quality Auditing Institute. This program assures development officers and building inspectors that a building bearing this label is designed and constructed to the NBC in effect at time of construction in the location that the home will be sited. Each factory manufacturing buildings to this standard must employ a certified third party agency to do regular inspections of the factory and their quality assurance program to ensure compliance to the NBC and that all materials have been inspected to conform to the proper specifications. All modular homes and most manufactured homes are currently labelled under this program. Local authorities then only need to inspect the work done on site for compliance to the relevant codes.

As building codes and materials change over time, the modular housing industry will also change and often lead the Canadian housing industry in making changes to provide sustainable housing that is safe, energy efficient and cost effective.

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