

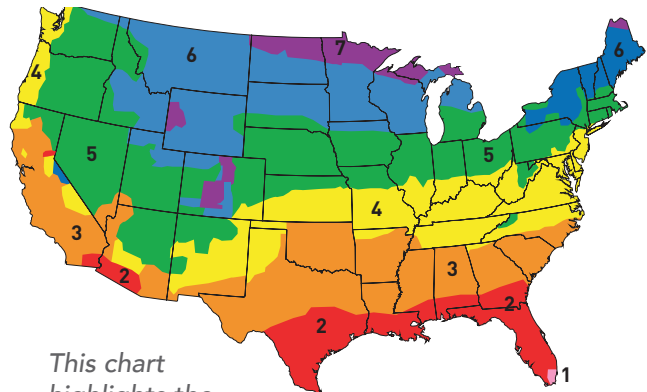
Risinger & Co Austin, Texas house

Case Study



Matt Risinger has made a name for himself by going above and beyond with his projects. A building science expert, Matt focuses on the craftsmanship of each build – ensuring best practices are prevalent throughout. This home is a perfect case in point.

Located in Austin, Texas – home base for Risinger & Co – this house has been built to be well beyond the building code requirements. While Austin would fall into Zone 2 on the climate map, the methods used in this build would be sufficient up to Climate Zone 5 – covering all but the far north. And, despite being over 170 miles from the Gulf Coast, this home was built to withstand a coastal environment; including extreme weather events like hurricanes and tropical storms, as well as the heightened humidity levels that come with building in the hot/humid Southern US.



This chart highlights the 2015 IECC Code requirements in each of these areas.

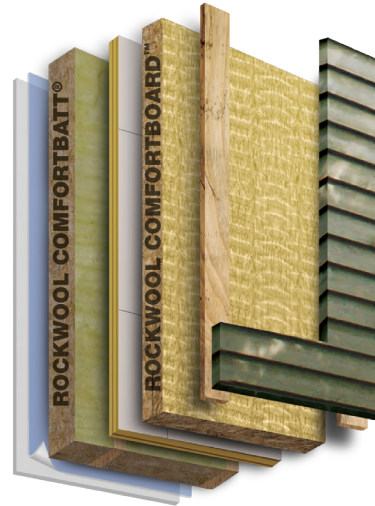
“There are still a lot of places in the country that are covered by dated code jurisdictions.”
Matt Risinger

Ensuring the house will dry to the outside.

The house was framed using LVL 2x6 studs – a plywood stud that’s typically only used in the headers and beams. This provided double the strength of traditional 2x6 framing. The prevalence of wood in the structure meant that there was an even greater need to control moisture. Matt and his team used a vapor-open yet airtight peel & stick housewrap and ROCKWOOL’s continuous insulation product COMFORTBOARD™ 80 on the exterior. COMFORTBOARD™ is a vapor-open insulating solution; this ensures the house will dry to the outside. The team used 2” COMFORTBOARD™ 80 to achieve an effective R-value of R6. This application is well beyond current building codes, but any fluctuations in temperature – such as a cold snap – or changes in humidity would not affect the structure’s moisture control.

Exceeding today’s building codes.

Self-motivated builders like Risinger seek to raise their own standards; an approach that makes good business sense. Year-over-year improvements have become a habit of his – resulting in his projects being well prepared for upgrades to building codes. “Often I find they become standard five or ten years later, which puts me well ahead of the curve,” explains Risinger. This presents a significant benefit to potential clients and enhances the demand for Risinger-built homes. It provides them with the confidence that they’re getting an exceptionally built home that could meet code requirements established years down the road.



Using the Home Energy Rating System index – the industry standard for measuring a home’s efficiency – this house achieved a score of 48; roughly 50% more efficient than the standard-code built home.

This was Matt’s first time using COMFORTBOARD™; he did note that there were some adjustments he and the team made when using this product. Compared to other products, COMFORTBOARD™ is heavier. While applying continuous insulation is typically a two-man job, additional time was required for this process because of the extra weight. And, since it’s less dense, additional thickness is required to achieve the desired R-value. COMFORTBOARD™ does also have the ability to be compressed, which should be taken into account when affixing rain screen or cladding.

Despite the adjustments required, Matt celebrated the choice to use COMFORTBOARD™ for the exterior continuous insulation, knowing the benefits it will deliver. “The exterior insulation will lead to a lifetime of energy savings, better durability for the structure – since we don’t have to risk any negative impacts inside the house caused by condensation – and we’re providing the added benefit of fire resistance,” he said. While this project in particular wasn’t built in a location at a high risk of fire, it still boasts stone wool insulation that will protect against flame spread and minimize the effects of smoke – both important safety features in the event of a fire.

