

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ( FAQs )

### 1. How Energy Efficient Are Log Homes?

If log homes incorporate a strong building design system and they are constructed properly, they will provide a home that is every bit as energy efficient as a well-insulated conventional frame house. Studies have shown that this result occurs even when the R-value for a log wall is lower than the R-value for a conventional frame wall and that is because of the thermal mass performance of a log wall.

Part of a log home's energy efficiency comes from what is called its " thermal mass " quality. This is the log's ability to absorb and store heat during the day and radiate this heat back into the interior of the home when the home starts to cool off in the evening. The result is that come morning, your home will not have cooled off as much ( compared to a conventional frame house ) and therefore, the cost to bring your home's temperature back up to a comfortable living level will be less.

The thickness of the log used in the construction of the home will have a bearing on the home's energy efficiency up to a point ( there is a point at which a log maxes out its contribution ), because of its thermal mass contribution. As well, the profile of the logs, log to log, and the nature of wall logs' connecting and sealant systems also have an important bearing on the energy-efficiency of your home. TCIH's consistent ( no hand variability in fitting your wall logs together ) diameter, profiled fit and its extremely tight and strong connection system plus its multi-faceted wall sealant system strongly reinforces and supports the energy-efficiency of your log home. Air infiltration along the seam of a log connection is a very important area to pay attention to because with the natural expansion and contraction of all logs, it becomes an integral area to the successful energy-efficiency of your home. Our approach to building log homes combats this concern very effectively( **See the Log Home Building System page for a complete explanation of our excellent system of designing and building log homes** ).

Please contact us should you require additional information on this topic.

### 2. Do You Do Custom Designs?

While TCIH offers a variety of log cabin and log home designs to consider building, our experience suggests that for the majority of people, the final house design is going to be a custom design to some degree. This is because everyone has their own lifestyle and preferences plus every building site is unique and this as well may dictate certain aspects of the house design. TCIH's professional log home designers have extensive experience in log structure design of all types and this experience will be applied to your own house design. In addition, TCIH's sales professionals also have considerable experience with different designs over the years,

together as a team, with yourself and the log home designer, the desired design will be created. The process is comfortable and progressive, beginning with conceptual ideas, preliminary floor and elevation plans and moving through to full construction drawings and cut and stack sheet shop drawings.

3. What Is Involved With The Maintenance Of A Log Home?

The single biggest issue with the maintenance of a log home is that approximately every five years, you will have to re-do the top coat of your exterior stain on the logs ( most exterior protection is a 3 coat system but not all ). Sometimes, a wall of the house that has heavy sun exposure may have to be re-done a little more frequently, such as in about 3 years. Some log home owners, do a brief annual maintenance where they simply clean off the dust and plant material that may be on the logs. This approach, which is a good idea, helps to maintain the beauty and aesthetic appearance of your log home plus it will make the process of cleaning the logs that much easier when you do decide to re-do your top coat of stain on the exterior logs.

4. Is There An Advantage To Using Kiln-Dried Logs?

While kiln-drying is often used with dimensional lumber and is very beneficial, it is totally inappropriate and expensive when it comes to log homes. First of all, it is virtually impossible to kiln-dry a log the size of which is needed to build a proper log home. It is difficult enough to properly kiln-dry a 4"x4" post, let alone a 9", 12" or 14" diameter wall log, even if it can be done, it can't be done cost-effectively and therefore, is a major, unnecessary expense for a log home buyer. Secondly, should you choose to pay for kiln-drying and it is partially successful, what happens as soon as the logs arrive at the building site is that they will take on the local environment which means that they gravitate to the relative humidity of the local conditions. Therefore, any costs to reduce the moisture content below these local conditions will be wasted expenses. Thirdly, kiln dried logs usually are smaller diameter logs which means you may be sacrificing potential energy-efficiency in your home because you are sacrificing thermal mass performance. Fourthly, kiln-dried logs commonly use green trees which means live trees are being cut down which is not the most eco-friendly approach.

TCIH's approach is to use dead-standing, dry logs that meet the highest grading standards. The logs we use have died from natural causes and we have allowed the drying of the log to take place naturally while the tree is still standing. An added benefit of this approach is that with open-celled species of trees, such as lodgepole pine and spruce, while the tree is standing, moisture and sap drain out of the tree through gravity. Therefore, we do not cut down live trees, we do not incur added expenses on our customer's behalf by trying to kiln-dry the log and we still manage to provide our customers with top quality, eco-friendly, cost-effective, dry logs for our log packages that have minimal, if any, sap concerns.

5. Do Log Homes Need Chinking or Caulking?

Since logs naturally expand and contract during the course of a year, there is always the possibility of air infiltration. This possibility becomes even more credible if the design and building system used in the house construction is weak. Therefore, every log home should definitely incorporate caulking/chinking. If this situation was not reason enough, there are two other important reasons to caulk/chink. First, the caulking/chinking provides for an effective seal against moisture and insects. Secondly, the caulking/chinking along with the required backing rod also helps seal the air cavity at the log seam and this sealed cavity enhances the energy-efficiency of your log wall. The log home world is saturated with log home owners who were told that they would never need to caulk/chink their homes, only to find in fairly short order that the quality, maintenance and comfort of their home immeasurably benefitted from having their homes caulked or chinked.

#### 6. What Is Included In TCIH's Log Package?

The standard log package will include all the logs as per the design of the house. Normally, this will include full log gables, a full log roof system and a log staircase package. Also included are approved fasteners above the sub floor, lateral groove foam gasket, a flexible caulking for the corner notches and a full set of construction drawings including cut and stack sheet shop drawings. Typically, log stain, log caulking and log railings are also included in the log package but this is an option for the customer.

In addition, because TCIH has its own in-house remanufacturing plant, we can also provide our customers with the option of many other structural and finishing components including timber beams, tongue & groove decking, log siding, board & batten siding, wide plank fir floors, and much more ( Please see our Specialty Wood Products page above for more details ).

On volume orders of multiple units, TCIH will also work with the customer to co-ordinate and supply a lock-up package should they so desire.

#### 7. Who Builds My Log Home?

In a standard scenario, a local general contractor in your area will do the excavation, foundation and the sub-floor for your home. An experienced log stacking crew will then arrive to erect the log structure and once this is completed, the general contractor will come back on site to take your house to lock-up or turn-key, whatever you have decided on. Under this approach, you are minimizing your costs of building by having the bulk of the building time-frame dealt with by local trades and contractors, thereby minimizing live-out allowance (LOA) expenses. ( NOTE: As an aside, the LOA expense on the log stacking side can also be reduced by having your log house pre-stacked in our yard and then quickly re-assembled at your site ).

In many areas of the country TCIH has qualified general contractors that we can introduce you to and if we do not have someone in the area you are building in and you do not know of

anyone, we will go in and source someone out for you. We will then co-ordinate the log portion of the house project with that contractor.

8. Where Does TCIH Ship Their Log Packages?

TCIH sells and ships their log packages right across Canada and anywhere in the world. Shipments throughout Canada and North America will be by way of a flat-bed semi-trailer and overseas shipments will be in 40' open-top containers. TCIH has considerable international experience and will look after arranging the shipping at the best rate that can be obtained, in order to keep the customer's costs to the minimum. Overseas shipments will be heat-treated if required plus the majority of shipments will have an anti-fungal treatment applied in order to protect them in transit and ensure a quality looking log upon arrival at their destination.

9. How Do We Get Started?

Getting started on your log home project is very easy. There is no need to think that you need extensive plans, diagrams, notes or pictures to initiate the project. While some details are certainly always helpful, if you don't have this, we can get you up to speed on ideas and options in fairly short order. From there, we will develop the conceptual design together and will go back and forth as the preliminary house plans get massaged and refined.

While everything can certainly be done via phone, e-mail, fax and courier, we always prefer to meet in person wherever possible. Where practical, we will make a special effort to travel to your building site and meet with you to assist both of us in the planning and design process.

We strongly recommend that clients ideally initiate their house plans at least one year prior to construction, the earlier the better. You can start your house plans without having to immediately commit to the log package. This approach gives you tremendous advantages in planning your project, lining up contractors, obtaining building permits, etc. and the front end cost is small.

It is important to keep in mind that we operate on a first-come first-served basis when it comes to preparing the construction drawings, blocking off plant production dates and scheduling stacking crews. If you are keen on a particular time-frame for your building construction, then it is important to get this time-frame locked-up so that you are not disappointed.

**P.S. We are friendly, supportive, subsist almost solely on water and we don't bite!**