



Crittter Comfort Cottage

These rules are for regional Crittter Comfort Cottage competitions. These rules are not valid for virtual Crittter Comfort Cottage competitions or the end of the year statewide EnergyWhiz event. Those rules can be found at: <https://www.energywhiz.com/competitions/>

Each team is to design and build a cost-effective, comfortable “home” for a crittter using energy-efficient, green building design and construction techniques. The team must also create a communication and marketing component that effectively describes the features and benefits of their Comfort Cottage for the crittter they have selected. A “crittter” in the context of this competition is considered to be any living creature, such as a mammal, bird, fish, insect, arachnid, amphibian or reptile.

The Crittter Comfort Cottage competition is open to teams of 2 - 6 students in grades 3 - 12. The competition is divided into three divisions: Elementary (3rd - 5th grade), Middle School (6th - 8th grade), and High School (9th - 12th grade). Teams of mixed grade levels will compete in the division of the highest grade level student.

Construction Requirements

Teams are to design and build a full-sized pet home that provides shelter and comfort for the crittter that occupies the built space, while being as energy and resource efficient (“green”) as possible. Renewable energy technologies that enhance the comfort or quality of life for the crittter are encouraged but not required.

Teams are responsible for researching the habits and needs of the crittter that will occupy their design, so that the final design is able to house the team’s selected crittter safely and comfortably. Teams are also expected to research the materials used in construction. Non-toxic materials must be used in areas where the animal could chew or come in contact with the material.

In designing their structure teams should also consider temperature regulation, air flow, containment (if necessary for the crittter), and the habitat’s intended location (i.e. designs meant for outdoor placement should be built out of materials to withstand outdoor weather conditions).

The habitat that is submitted for design judging must be one created for this year’s Crittter Comfort Cottage competition. If reusing components from a previous year, the new design must be at least 50% different from entries submitted in a previous year.

Projects that are deemed unsafe will be disqualified.

Communications and Marketing

Each team is to create a marketing piece to accompany their design. The purpose of this is to highlight the energy efficient design, any green aspects of the structures, and the quality of the habitat for the selected animal. These can be in any format that the team chooses. The marketing piece should be

geared toward the general public. The examples below are not meant to be exclusive; students are encouraged to be creative. Some marketing examples include:

- brochure/flyer/handouts
- video clip/television commercial
- poster

Teams will also be judged on how well the design is marketed to the judging team. This includes team member knowledge, verbal presentation to the judges and salesmanship.

Competition Day

At the competition, each team will have a 'booth' space (at least 10' x 12' with a 6' table), in which to set up their project, discuss their animal habitat with the judges and present their marketing strategy and materials to the general public. All teams must be able to discuss their Critter Comfort Cottage with the judges and explain the energy efficient and green design and construction components

A representation or facsimile of the selected critter or critters is to be displayed along with the pet home at the EnergyWhiz event; no live critters will be permitted. **Any team that brings a live critter to the event will be disqualified.**

In the event that a team is unable to transport their design to the competition, the team must include a photo display of their project in their booth and be able to explain their project through additional materials. This can be done through any number of medium such as documents, videos, schematics, charts, blueprints, drawings, etc. Teams should have enough supporting materials to adequately represent their design and student construction.

No pets except service animals will be permitted at EnergyWhiz.

Judging Criteria

Awards (1st - 3rd) will be given in each division for **Best Design**.

Best Design includes:

- **Design Decisions** – How well does the team understand energy efficient/green building design? How thorough are their design decisions? Was careful attention paid to parts selection and integration? Was proper attention paid to safety issues? How well does the team understand the habitat needs of their chosen critter?
- **Green Building Technology** – Were recycled and/or green materials used? Did the team use passive and/or active renewable energy or energy efficiency in their design? How well is energy efficient, green building practices represented in the project?
- **Construction Technique** – How well did the students construct their design? Is the design durable? Will it be sturdy enough for animal habitation in the selected environment?
- **Function** – Does the design provide a good habitat for the pet? Are the size and features appropriate? Will the habitat maintain appropriate temperatures? Was the design tested?
- **Creativity of Design** – How creative is the design? Is it a novel or interesting solution to a problem?

- **Marketing Materials** – Do the marketing materials inspire interest or create demand for the product? How well did the student team market their cottage?