

In a conventional light wood frame construction (“stick-built”) home, the studs, joists, top and bottom plates, rafters, etc. constitute the frame of the house. The frame is load bearing which means that the house depends on its strength and integrity to remain standing.

The fact that a shipping container as a standalone unit is already very strong, a container home doesn’t actually need a load bearing frame. Your container home does, however, need a frame to serve two important functions:

First, it creates a cavity called a bay between the exterior wall and the interior wall for the insulation, wiring and plumbing.

Second, it adds strength and rigidity back into the walls that is lost when you remove portions of the container’s sides for the windows and door.

The framing plan I outline in this book is a simplified and lighter design intended to serve these two purposes. These are the basic framing components:

*Studs* are vertical members that make up the walls.

*Top/Bottom Plates* are upper and lower horizontal pieces of the walls that sandwich the studs. With metal studs, these are called *channels*.

*Joists* are horizontal members in the floor and ceiling that run transversely (side to side).

*King Studs* are studs that fasten to either side of a window frame.

*Headers* are horizontal pieces that fasten to the top of a window and join the two king studs.

*Sills* are horizontal pieces that fasten to the bottom of a window frame and join the two king studs.

*Cripples* are short studs that go between the header and top plate, and the sill and bottom plate.

