



Building Success 101

Q: Am I liable for accidents that occur during the construction of my house?

A: In most cases, no. Builders and their subcontractors carry liability and worker's compensation insurance against job site accidents. In addition, they are regulated by the federal Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), as well as their insurers, to maintain a safe workplace, eliminate hazards, and train their workers in safe work habits and emergency response. Make sure that you follow your builder's safety guidelines and procedures should you visit the job site.

Insuring Homeowner Satisfaction

The idea of a "punch list" may not sound very appealing at first, but it is really an invaluable tool for making sure our homes meet the standards and expectations of our clients. A punch list -- industry slang for a short checklist of items that need to be completed, repaired, or replaced -- is also an effective communication tool with our trade partners and our clients. It acts as a quick and easy reference to the status of the project and its state of readiness.

Most commonly, punch lists are used as the house nears completion. Increasingly, one is created and addressed internally (by our staff, without the homeowner present), and a second one developed as a homeowner and one of our associates walk through the house just before it is finished. In either case, the punch list typically contains minor items that can be addressed quickly and easily. Conducting an internal inspection and addressing punch list items before the final client walk-through has proven to be a good procedure for us to improve the completion of the home in a timely manner.

Lesser known (but common among the most professional builders) are the punch lists that are produced at almost every phase of the building process. This enables us to communicate and collaborate with our product suppliers and subcontractors regarding the quality and status of their work in progress. Like those created during a final walk-through with a client, punch lists during construction ensure that each stage of work is complete and ready for the next phase. We can then call for an inspection by the local building department or schedule the next wave of trade partners and material deliveries to start the next stage of work. This formal process is key to managing the thousands of details in building or renovating a home, helping us stay on schedule and on budget.

Still, no matter how many times we conduct inspections and develop punch lists, no house is perfect. There are bound to be some things that our clients notice and identify to us during a final walk-through; in addition, there may be items we will point out as already on the punch list, and explain the policies and procedures in place for taking care of everything on the punch list in a timely manner.

Our goal is that the items on the list be completed well before occupancy. For those items not completed before occupancy we try to schedule the necessary labor and material deliveries to address the punch list items as quickly as possible out of respect for our client's time and busy schedule.

With a reliable and consistent punch list system in place, we are able to deliver a truly completed house that meets or exceeds the expectations of our clients.

When we communicate effectively with our clients, subcontractors, and materials suppliers throughout the process, punch lists are typically short and easy to complete, helping us deliver the most positive overall experience and best possible client experience possible.

Warm regards,

Richard

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