



Dickson Development Corporation
A Tradition of Innovative Quality Construction

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Building Success 101

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

A: In most cases, no. Professional Builders and their subcontractors carry liability and worker's compensation insurance against job site accidents. In addition, we are regulated by the federal Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), as well as their insurers, to maintain a safe workplace, eliminate hazards, and train our 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.

Communication is essential for us to be able to meet the needs of our clients. The following article addresses this subject. We at Dickson Development Corporation strive to have excellent communication with our clients from the beginning of our relationship with the design and contract phases, through the construction, and then not only during the completion and warranty stages, but after everything is completed. If we are needed we can always be of assistance.

Communication: The Key to Success

Here's the secret you've been waiting for: To help ensure a successful and satisfying homebuilding experience, maintain regular and productive communication with your builder and his team. Lack of communication is, without a doubt, the single leading cause of headaches and hard feelings. Minimize stress and ease the building process by keeping the lines of communication open at all times.

To start with, as you search for a new home and builder, pay attention to your comfort level with each builder's communication style. Is the builder responsive to your questions and ideas? Does he -- or the sales rep -- explain company procedures for regular contact and review during construction? The sales approach is often an indication of how communicative the builder will be during construction and after closing. Effective follow-up efforts that provide real information also help to establish a solid foundation for communication through the process.

When you reach a purchasing decision, make sure you are comfortable with the builder's procedures for discussion of your project and its progress. Many builders encourage periodic walk-throughs of the house at critical stages, such as during structural framing, electrical and plumbing rough-in, and drywall. Find out about opportunities to conduct informal meetings or use other communication efforts (such as phone calls or e-mails), and ask how quickly you can expect a response from your builder when you have a concern.

You should also expect and talk through a detailed scope of work with your builder. The scope of work outlines the construction process along a timeline or schedule. Use it as a guide to ask for information and opportunities to visit the construction site. When you use the scope of work, together with on-site visits, you will gain a 'three-dimensional' understanding of the construction process. The scope and schedule will also establish deadlines for key decisions you must make *on time*, such as selecting paint colors, lighting and plumbing fixtures and flooring materials.

An essential part of the owner-builder communication process is the "change order," which is the procedure established by a builder for making changes after construction begins. Few projects are completed without some changes. You should know how to do this before the first dirt is moved. You should learn, too, the details of your builder's warranty and service program. Finally, while no one likes to think about problems, work with your builder to determine a mutually agreeable process for addressing concerns that may surface.

Successful builders have plans in place for communicating effectively with their homebuyers throughout the sales, construction, and warranty service process. While respecting existing processes, you may also take the opportunity 'up front' to express your needs and to suggest the changes that will better suit your situation, preferences, and comfort level. Once you've settled on a communications plan, stick with it so that both you and your builder can rely on the process and allow it to work.

Warm regards,

Richard

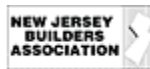
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