



## 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.

## The Key to Building Success...Communicate!

If there's one thing you can do to help ensure a successful and satisfying homebuilding experience, it is to maintain regular and productive communication with your builder and his staff. Effective communication is key to reducing concerns and stress during the building process. Keep the lines of communication open at all times.

As you engage in the builder selection process, gain a sense of how comfortable you are with each builder's communication style during the sales process. These early communications often reflect how your builder will communicate to you during construction and after closing. In addition to imparting the sales message, builders who are effective communicators will encourage your input and provide satisfactory answers to questions you pose. Effective follow-up efforts that provide real information also help to establish a solid foundation for communication through the process.

As you reach a decision to select a builder, make sure you are comfortable with how you and your builder will discuss the 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 once the interior walls have been drywalled. 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, which outlines the construction process along a timeline or schedule. Use the scope of work as a guide that elicits questions about the construction of your new home to gain a better understanding of the 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 be familiar with this process before the first dirt is moved. You should learn, too, the details of your builder's warranty and service program.

Savvy and successful builders have a plan in place for communicating effectively with their homebuyers throughout the sales, construction, and

warranty service process. Respect that process, while taking appropriate opportunities to express your needs and suggest slight changes within it to better suit your situation, preferences, and comfort level. Once you've settled on a communication plan, stick with it! It is a key to a 'safe and sane' building process and providing you the home of your dreams.

We at Dickson Development take pride in our high level of custom service which includes open and clear communication from the beginning to the end of each project.

Warm regards,

*Richard*

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