

CHECK BEFORE HIRING A CONTRACTOR

Do your homework before you have work done on your home. Don't hire just anyone! Use this checklist to select a contractor you can trust with your most valuable asset.

- Is the contractor licensed to work in New Mexico? Check www.contractorsnm.com or call Contractors Licensing Service, Inc. at 505-452-8311.
- Does the contractor have proof of workers' compensation and general liability insurance? If not, you may be liable for any construction-related accidents on your premises. Ask to see "Certificates of Insurance" for these coverages.
- Will the contractor provide you with names of recent customers? Call and ask if they would hire the same contractor again.
- Can you inspect the contractor's work, both completed and in progress? If so, look for quality of workmanship and materials.
- Will the contractor provide you with a complete and clearly written contract? A deposit is often required, but **DO NOT** pay cash or the entire amount up front.
- Are you able to communicate easily with the contractor? Misunderstandings may cause problems. You will be in close contact with the contractor and may share your house with the crew until the project is completed.
- Be wary of contractors who go door-to-door offering discounts for finding other customers, and watch out for those who offer to use materials left over from other jobs.



new appliances, and any other warranty the builder may choose to provide for your new home.

There is an "implied" warranty that holds builders liable for code violations up to ten-years after your new home has been completed. The New Mexico Building Code is upgraded periodically, and the "implied" warranty applies to the building code that was in effect at the time your home was originally constructed.

Building a home is part science, part art, and part plain hard work. As one of the last handmade products available to us, each home is unique in the same way that an oft painting by a landscape artist is unique. The artist can stand in the same place and paint the same panorama using identical colors and the same size canvas as for a previous work. Yet in the end, every painting has a personality distinctly its own.

*New Mexico Home
Builders Association*



*Selecting
Your*

**CUSTOM
HOME
TEAM**

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Builders Association*

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SELECTING YOUR CUSTOM HOME TEAM

Building a custom home is an exciting experience. A great deal of your time, thought, and personality will go into the design and specifications as your housing ideas come together to form a home that is uniquely yours.

To accomplish your goal, you might engage professionals from separate organizations. In addition to establishing your budget and selecting a builder, you may engage the services of an architect, an interior designer, a landscape architect, and a real estate agent. Often one team member leads to the rest through referrals. An architect whose work you like may recommend a builder or a builder whose quality meets your standards may suggest an architect, and so on.

Perhaps you will work with a design-build firm. The design-build approach brings together design and construction expertise, usually resulting in greater continuity of service. The joining of design and construction can save you time and money.

However you organize your design team, keep these points in mind:

- Check with relatives, friends, and colleagues for recommendations.
- What are the firm's design specialties?
- Does the style and quality the designers are known for coincide with your needs and wants? Look at examples of their work.
- Can this team accommodate special needs you have such as creating an historically accurate design, maxi-

mizing a view, achieving accessibility, or incorporating special amenities?

- How do they charge? What's included? What's extra?
- Does their client load permit acceptable scheduling?
- Ask about formal training, professional memberships, and check references.

QUALITY AND WARRANTY

Many builders have developed formal inspection procedures. Building Inspectors, warranty insurance companies, FHA, VA, or your lender may also inspect the home. However, no matter how strong the commitment of the builder and all the other inspectors, the desire for a high quality home will be strongest for you, the eventual owner.

No matter what the price of your home, you may reach a point where your standards exceed everyone else's. Or you may not have the technical knowledge to judge the quality of every stage of the work and wonder if it is done well. Trust and information are vital to your peace of mind at such times. For perspective on this important subject, keep these points in mind:

- Building codes make no distinctions based on price. Code books do not include one set of regulations for homes up to \$200,000 and another for those over \$200,000. Codes require that all homes meet the same level of safety.
- Codes make no attempt to set standards for aesthetics. Many steps in construction allow the builder and the buyers to exercise their discretion. Performance in such

areas is based on experience, pride of workmanship and the ever present-budget.

- Price differences often show most notably in size and features. The more expensive the home, usually the larger and more complex the design. The list of features in a \$597,000 home is longer than that of a home costing \$113,000. For instance, the master bath of the former has a jetted tub with a brass faucet. Tile walls, including hand-painted accent tiles, surround the tub. Beside the tub is a spacious walk-in shower, enclosed by clear glass panels in gold-tone frames. The cabinets have raised-panel doors with brass knobs and provide lots of storage space.
- The master bath in the second home includes a fiber-glass tub with a chrome faucet. Tile surrounds this tub also. The buyers select from eight colors, none of which include hand-painted accents. A shower rod comes standard, but space limitations prohibit a walk-in shower. A single cabinet beneath the vanity offers some storage space. Its unadorned doors have no hardware.

Although different in appearance and price, the plumbing to both tubs must work without leaking. Neither tub should have chips or gouges. The tile in both baths must meet the same standards. In time, grout and caulking in both baths will need maintenance by the homeowners. The cabinet doors should all operate smoothly and be level. They will all show variations in the way the wood took the stain.

The State of New Mexico does not require contractors offer warranties on construction. At closing your builder will provide you with the manufacturers' warranty documents for the

