

CHOOSING A BUILDER

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If you're planning on building a new home, you should shop for your builder as carefully as you shop for anything else for your new home. You want to know that you are buying a good quality home from a reputable builder.

How do I choose a builder? The National Association of Home Builders suggests making a list of possible builders to interview.

- **Obtain** a list of builders who construct homes in our area (see Rochester Area Builders membership listing pages 18-22).
- **Read** through the ads and articles to learn about area builders, the types of homes they are building, and the prices you can expect to pay.
- **Contact** real estate agents and ask friends and relatives for recommendations.

One of the best ways to learn about builders is to visit homes they have built and talk with the home owners. Attending home shows and open houses are good opportunities to look at homes and talk with builders.

Have a question? Never hesitate to ask a question. What seems like an insignificant question might yield an important answer. According to Les Radcliffe, some commonly asked questions people ask a prospective home builder are:

How long would the process of building a new home take? The process of building a new home varies from simple starter homes in the three month range to nine months or more for larger homes with many amenities.

Have you built this style home before? Very few builders specialize in any one style home. Most builders are very willing and able to build all styles of homes.

Can we use our own plan or do we have to choose one from the builder? Most builders in this area are smaller custom builders who are very willing to work from the customer's plan or work with the customer to develop a plan that meets their needs.

If I want to make changes, how will these be handled? Change orders should be completed before the work is done. This spells out the scope of the work and the cost difference from the original contract amount. This is good for both the customer and the builder.

How are issues that develop after move in handled? Minnesota statute is quite specific in regard to warranty coverage. However, there are other items that are not addressed by statute and should be discussed between the homeowner and builder.

Industry Trends

There are some hot trends in home building now. "Green" is popular from installing energy efficient appliances and fixtures to applying green building criteria in the systems of the home. Preferred products are either natural or permanent and low maintenance. Many people are considering smaller homes with lots of amenities.