

How to Build a Custom Home: Checklist

Here, in checklist form, are all the steps of building your home. The asterisk by the numbers mean that the Building Inspector must check the work at this stage before construction can continue.

(★ = Indicates inspection may be required at this time.)

It's Much Easier With Southland Custom Homes

We specialize in building custom homes for a wide variety of buyers. We build board-by-board – no pre-fab or modular construction – and, since 1980, have built more than 3,000 dream homes! Some customers have us complete their home 50% to the Shell stage. Others want us to build the house 100%, ready for move-in. We do either or any stage in between.

We have arranged the work steps so they approximately match the completion state: 50% (Shell), Steps 1-10; 95% complete, Steps 1-16; and 100% complete, Steps 1-20.

Step 1: Buying Land

- 1. Frontage on County road
- 2. Land Survey
- 3. Title Search
- 4. Title Insurance
- 5. Water Table for Well
- 6. Septic System Soil Test
- 7. Solar Heat
- 8. Land easily improved?

Step 2: Before Closing

- 9. Review Loan Documents
- 10. Prepare Specifications Sheet
- 11. Prepare complete Materials/ Labor Cost Estimates ("Take Offs")
- 12. Submit Loan Application
- 13. Sewer Tap (or Septic System Permit)
- 14. Building Permit
- 15. Construction Loan Closing

Step 3: After Closing

- 16. Building License required?
- 17. Compliance Bond required?
- 18. Water Tap & Meter (or contact Well Digger)
- 19. Order Temporary Services
 - Electricity
 - Water (if no well)
- 20. Prepare Site Plan

Step 4: Subcontractors

- 21. Check References
- 22. Are they Bonded?
- 23. Are they Licensed?
- 24. Guarantee their work?
- 25. If Guaranteed, How Long?
- 26. Liability Insurance
- 27. Workman's Compensation Insurance
- 28. Who do Better Builders Use?
- 29. Get Written Estimates

- 30. Check Low Bidder's quality

Step 5: Buying Materials

- 31. Select 3 reputable Building Supply firms
- 32. Submit Material Estimates to each
- 33. Check supply house Bid against original estimates and correct difference
- 34. Select Building Supply firm with best combination of Service, Terms and Price

Step 6: Site & Foundation

- 35. Review Step 3, then do Rough Grading
- 36. Cut Driveway
- 37. Put 4"-6" Gravel on Driveway
- 38. Get Water Meter (or Dig Well)
- 39. Clear Home Site, plus 10' – 15' Work Area
- ★ 40. Install Temporary Power Pole
- 41. Crawl Space or Basement
 - Batter Boards
 - ★ • Dig Foundation Footings
 - ★ • Pour Footings
 - Lay Block or Pour Walls
- ★ 42. Pre-Treat for termites
- 43. Waterproof/Backfill
- 44. Slab and Garage
 - Form Boards
 - ★ • Plumbing
 - Miscellaneous Pipes
 - Gravel
 - Polyethylene vapor barrier
 - ★ • Pre-Wire (landscape)
 - Pour Concrete
- 45. Spot Foundation Survey
- 46. Gas, Sewer & Miscellaneous Utility lines

Step 7: Framing

- 47. Buy Building Level
- 48. Check Foundation Level/ Square
- 49. Check Level/ Square Again
- 50. Have Framing Materials Delivered
- 51. Maintain Materials Supply
- 52. "Cull" Materials
- 53. Basement Walls & Beams
- 54. Subfloor, 1st Floor
- 55. Set Special Tubs, 1st Floor
- 56. Walls/ Partitions, 1st Floor
- 57. Subfloor, 2nd Floor
- 58. Set Special Tub, 2nd Floor
- 59. Walls/ Partitions, 2nd Floor
- 60. Wall Sheathing
- 61. Check Level, Square & Layout as work progresses
- 62. Ceiling Joists
- 63. Rafters & Trusses
- 64. Roof Sheathing and Felt
- 65. Framing Inspection
- ★ 66. Install Doors/Windows
- 67. Measure Cabinets



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Step 8: Exterior Masonry/Miscellaneous Tasks

- 68. Schedule Delivery of Exterior Windows, Doors, Siding, Trim
- 69. Install Doors (if not done in framing)
- 70. Install Windows (if not done in framing)
- 71. Install factory built Fireplace
- 72. Miscellaneous Rough Frame and Deadwood
- 73. Install Brick/Stone (if any is specified)

Step 9: Roofing

- 74. Install Roofing as soon as possible
- 75. Check Horizontal Roof Shingle Lines
- 76. Align Shingles' Vertical Splits
- 77. Four (4) Nails Per Shingle
- 78. Stagger Metal Flashing

Step 10: Cornice & Siding

- 79. Check Siding manufacturer's Nailing Instructions
- 80. Check Siding as it's installed
- 81. Check installation of Flashing
- 82. Install Garage Doors
- 83. Exterior Pain/ Stain
- 84. Clean Up

Step 11: Plumbing Rough

- 85. Specify Plastic or Copper Pipe
- ★ 86. Rough-In for Bath, Kitchen, etc.
- 87. Pay only after work is inspected

Step 12: Heating & Cooling Rough

- 88. Take Floorplan to Power Company for size of system
- 89. Smaller system is usually more efficient
- 90. For bigger house, consider using multiple systems
- ★ 91. Rough-In Heating/ Cooling
- 92. Get Rough-In approved by Building Inspector before making payment

Step 13: Electrical Rough

- 93. Make sketch of furniture in each room, showing outlets & switches.
- 94. Get approved for proposed (Wiring Plan)
- 95. Get Power Company to recommend how much Amp Service is needed
- ★ 96. Rough-In Wiring
- 97. Pay for Rough-In only after inspection

Step 14: Insulation

- 98. Get Power Company to determine amount of R Value & Insulation needed
- 99. With blow-in Insulation, do not block soffit vents

Step 15: Ceiling & Wall Covering

- 100. If you install Drywall yourself, let contractor give it a smooth finish
- 101. ½" Drywall is recommended for 16" on-center studs
- 102. Stipple Ceilings before painting walls
- 103. Clean the Interior

Step 16: Trim & Cabinets

- 104. Hire a Master Carpenter
- 105. Select either Stain or Paint Grade Trim
- 106. Allow ½" space under baseboard for Carpet
- 107. Install Interior Doors & Kitchen/ Bath, Cabinets
- 108. Recommend caulking around window & door trim, inside & out
- 109. Finish the Fireplace

Step 17: Interior Paint & Wallpaper

- 110. Paint Interior walls & trim
- 111. Over Drywall, use one coat of primer & two finish coats.
- 112. Put up wallpaper

Step 18: Final Finish & Trim

- ★ 113. Call back Plumbing, Electrical, & Heating/ Cooling Contractors for Final Work
- 114. After final inspection, utilities can be turned on (Power may be required prior to final inspection)
- 115. Install Tile, Hardwood, Carpet & Vinyl
- 116. Install Mirrors & Bath Accessories
- 117. Install Gutters and Screens
- 118. Landscaping, Drives, Walks, Patio, etc.
- ★ 119. Final Inspection

Step 19: Final Clean Up

- 120. Fix little nicks, touch up paint, clean windows, floors, etc.
- 121. Install Appliances

Step 20: Move-In

- 122. Move in & enjoy your new home!