

HOW TO CHOOSE A REPUTABLE BUILDER OR REMODELER

You should shop for your builder or remodeler as carefully as you shop for your home. Whether you are buying a condo, a townhouse, a custom built house, or renovating an existing home, you want to know that you will be satisfied with the result. Selecting a reputable builder or remodeler can be difficult, but here is a checklist to help you start your search.

1. What type of house do you want? Consider size, location, style and price range.

2. Create a list of builders that fit your needs. Search the Home Builders Association of Greater Tulsa Web site, the 2018 HBA Directory, the real estate section of the local newspaper, and ask friends, relatives and local real estate agents for recommendations.

3. Do your homework. Once you have a builder in mind, find out if they are a member of the Home Builders Association. This will ensure that the builder carries the proper insurance, has provided references and all of the members have agreed to abide by a code of business ethics. Investigate the builder or remodeler by asking for a customer reference and contacting the Better Business Bureau to check for complaints. Visit homes they have built and talk with the owners. Ask builders on your list for the addresses of their recently built homes and subdivisions. Builders may even be able to provide names of some home owners who would be willing to talk with you. Talk to several owners, and try to get a random sample of opinions. The more people you talk with, the more likely your impression will be accurate. At the very least, drive by and see if the homes are visually appealing. Usually, people tell you if they are pleased with their homes. And if they are not, they'll probably want to tell you why.

Some questions to ask builders and owners include:

- Are you happy with your home?
- If you had any problems, were they fixed promptly and properly?
- Would you buy another home from this builder?
- How long has the company been in business?
- Whom do you contact for customer service after the sale?
- Should requests be in writing?
- Who will be responsible for correcting problems with major appliances?
- Does the builder use state-of-the-art energy features?

4. Look at new homes whenever you can. Home shows and open houses sponsored by builders are good opportunities to look at homes.

5. Remember...you must establish good communications with the company you have chosen. Do not discuss work with the workers or subcontractors, talk directly to the builder or remodeler if a problem arises or if you wish to change something after the work is in progress. If you designate one person as the family spokesperson, it will avoid confusion. Regular meetings between you and your builder to discuss the progress of the work will help to avoid misunderstandings and will ensure that the work proceeds on schedule to a satisfactory completion.