



A Member of the Southern Living Custom Builder Program

Tips For Choosing A Custom Homebuilder

Selecting a qualified, reputable builder is the first step in building a new custom home. Dillard-Jones Builders has compiled these tips from the **Better Business Bureau** and the **National Association of Home Builders** to help you choose wisely:

TIP 1

Check with the Better Business Bureau for any complaints against the builder. Check your local or state BBB and look online for any unresolved complaints. Look at the number of complaints and the dates filed.

TIP 2

Contact your local and state home builders licensing departments to be sure the home builder is licensed to do business in your area. Ask if the new home builder is bonded and insured, as well. Ask the state licensing department about any complaints against the builder. Make sure the new home builder is licensed to build new homes and not just remodeling.

TIP 3

Go online and check with your state's official website for access to any civil lawsuits that may have been filed against the builder. You can also do this at the county level, but you should check for civil lawsuits throughout the state. Simply enter the name of the builder, or his company, in the legal search engine to find any lawsuits.

TIP 4

Ask the builder for references and speak with the references. Ask the new home owners if the builder met the schedule and budget. Ask if the job was of good quality. Ask if they are happy with the job and if you can look at the home.

TIP 5

Visit the new home builder's present construction sites, if possible. Look at the overall site and the number of subcontractors working. Look for quality workmanship. Look at the building permit to see when it was issued to understand the length of time he's been working at that particular new home site.

TIP 6

Talk to local real estate agents to learn more about the new home builder. Talk to the local home builders association about the builder's experience and any complaints.

TIP 7

Ask the builder for a copy of his contracts; a blank one to study. Make sure there is a place for a completion date and penalties if the date is not met. Make sure there is a guarantee written into the contract that all subcontractors will be paid on a timely basis so there will not be a mechanics lien placed on your property. Take the blank contract to a lawyer to read if necessary.

TIP 8

Trust your gut instinct about the new home builder, after you've checked him out. If you feel there is a personality clash with him, consider how difficult it will be communicating with him. On the other hand, if you've checked him out and trust him, then read the contract carefully. Sign it and you'll soon be in your new home.