



The Framework to Project Success

Section 6.1 – A Guide to the Construction Sequence

Focus on the Sequence, Not the Schedule

The way construction often goes is that 90% of the work goes well, but that last 10% holds up everything. One contractor doesn't finish in time for the next to start. Then that subcontractor has to move on to other work and can't come back for several weeks or more. Then your builder spends twice as much time tracking down materials and subs to finish the last 10% of the job.

This can make it difficult to commit to hard deadlines. It's why instead of giving you a schedule to fill out we want to guide you through the construction sequence. A broad understanding of the construction schedule allows homeowners to make more informed decisions. Our goal is to help you...

- **Plan your Involvement**
- **Understand the Scope and Timing of Each Phase**
- **Identify Milestones in the Construction Sequence**
- **Understand Your Options if Timelines Shift**

Plan your Involvement during Construction

- **Review the Schedule with Your Builder**
 - At the start of the project, meet with your builder to review the timeline for each phase.
 - Identify critical parts of the job when your input is needed, such as selecting finishes or reviewing needed design adjustments.
 - Establish the frequency and schedule of project updates.
- **Prepare for Key Decision Points**
 - Builders rely on timely decisions from homeowners to keep the schedule on track. The goal is to make as many decisions as possible during the planning phase before construction starts to eliminate any delays.
 - Agree upon a process for making decisions when a change has to be made.
 - Can substitutes be made without your approval if it doesn't increase the budget or delay the schedule?
 - Decide in advance on potential backup choices.

- When are you willing to compromise to keep the schedule moving?

• Scheduling Site Visits in Advance

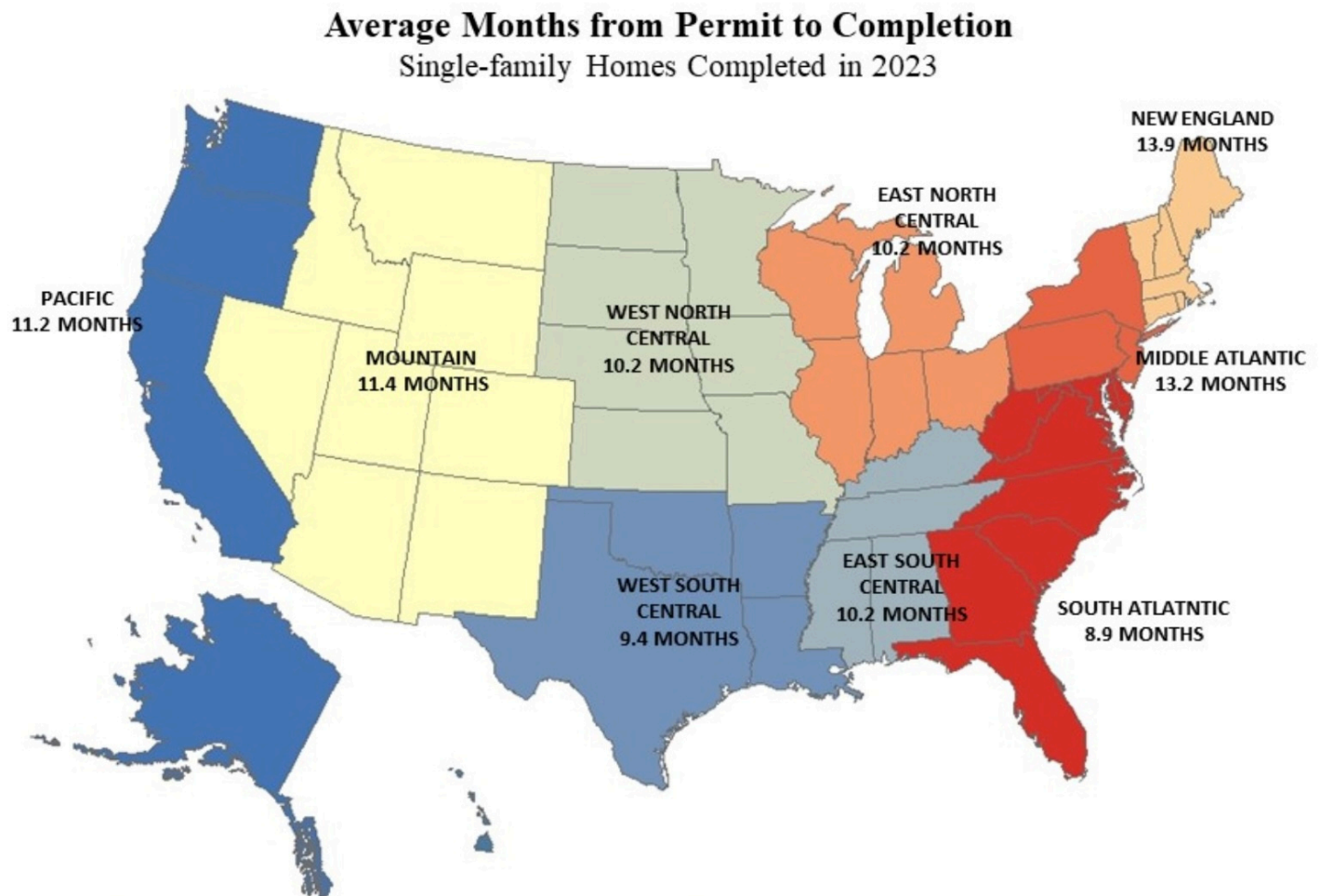
- Look to visit the job site near important milestones...
 - The completion of framing
 - The completion of the mechanical system rough-in
 - The completion of drywall and the prime coat of paint
 - The installation of countertops

• Stay Informed but Flexible about Move-In

- Establish a tentative move-in date early, knowing it will depend upon unknown factors.
- Request more frequent schedule updates over the last few months of the project.
- Plan your move-in with the option to adjust dates around a two-week window if needed.

The Timing of Each Phase

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) estimates that the average new construction project lasted 10.1 months in 2023. 10 months from permit acceptance to completion. This ranged from 8.9 months to 13.9 months depending upon the region. Custom home builds averaged 15.2 months.



Source: NAHB tabulation of data from the Survey of Construction, U.S. Census Bureau.

Here is an estimated timeline for each phase of the construction process, including typical time ranges based on averages from industry standards...

1. **Pre-Construction: 4 – 8 weeks**
2. **Site Preparation and Excavation: 1 – 2 weeks**
3. **Foundation: 2 – 4 weeks**
4. **Framing: 4 – 8 weeks**
5. **Roofing and Exterior Finishes: 2 – 4 weeks**
6. **Mechanical Systems Rough-Ins: 4 – 6 weeks**
7. **Insulation and Drywall: 2 – 4 weeks**
8. **Interior Finishes: 6 – 12 weeks**
9. **Completion and Final Touches: 2 – 4 weeks**
10. **Landscaping: 1 – 2 weeks**

Key Milestones in the Construction Sequence

- **Site Survey and Stake Out**
 - Flags are placed around the property boundary and the location of the house, ensuring the structure is positioned properly on the lot and ready for the foundation work.
- **Foundation is Cured and Concrete Forms Stripped**
 - After the concrete has dried and the foundation backfilled, the project is ready for framing.
- **Structure is Dried In**
 - This means framing is done, the roof is covered, windows and exterior doors are installed, and the house is wrapped in a water-resistant membrane, protecting it from the elements. These things should be completed before mechanical rough-in starts. But it does not require siding to be finished.
- **Mechanical Rough-In is Complete**
 - Plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems are installed within walls and ceilings, so that insulation and drywall work can start.
- **Prime Paint Coat is Applied**
 - After drywall, a primer coat of paint is applied to all interior walls. Drywall is not truly finished until this first coat is on. You need paint to finish the drywall inspection. The finish coats of paint can slide around your schedule if needed.
- **Countertops are Installed**
 - Countertops need to be installed before you can finalize your interior finishes. After countertops, the plumber, electrician, HVAC and other trades will come back to “trim out” and finish their work.
- **Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is Issued**
 - The CO is your golden ticket. It declares your home safe and ready for occupancy. After the CO, there is usually only punch list items.
- **AV Systems Pass Testing**

- The AV installers are often the last trade on your project. This involves hanging tv's, testing the internet and any connected devices or access points.

How to be Prepared if Your Schedule Shifts

- **Understand Common Causes of Delays**

- Delays can arise from weather, supply problems, subcontractor scheduling conflicts, and many other factors outside of your builder's control.

- **Compromising on Selections to Prioritize the Schedule**

- If supply problems arise, consider being flexible with selections like finishes and fixtures, if your preferred items have longer lead times that could impact the schedule. Discuss alternative options that are more readily available but still meet your must-have preferences.

- **Communicate Frequently with Your Builder**

- Set up regular check-ins with your builder to discuss progress and potential challenges. Ask about dates for the above milestones to better understand the big picture of your schedule.

In the next section, we will go over the construction phases in detail.
