



# Changes *After* Contract...



**TIM,**

*What happens if we sign our contract and decide to change our project?*

There is no need to worry about changes after a contract is signed, but they definitely require a well-defined process.

Some critical traits are common among

professionals who create amazing homes for happy customers. One trait is meticulous attention to detail, and another is conveying those details clearly to the homeowners. Great builders are great communicators, and part of being a great communicator is

recording every aspect of the job.

It takes a lot of work to craft detailed construction documents, but that work pays off by showing the homeowners exactly what they're getting and by helping the builder understand exactly what the homeowners want.



These documents set expectations and ensure a smoother, more enjoyable build process.

Critical documents include the contract, the plans, and the specs. They also include change orders.

A change order is typically defined as anything that changes the work's scope, schedule, or cost after the homeowner has signed the final contract. Professional builders try to avoid changes by helping clients to choose products before work begins and by writing precise specs (product descriptions) for the homeowners to review and

agree on.

However, this effort can only reduce changes, not avoid them altogether. A homeowner may want a bigger window in that wall, or the builder may find unexpected decay or harm during a renovation project.

No matter the problem, such changes must be handled carefully. That's when good change order documents prove their worth.

### KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING

It's hard to overstate the importance of detail here. Vague

change orders are notorious for bad outcomes, and lots of homeowners may lose trust in their builder if they feel they are paying for something they didn't understand.

Most builders don't intentionally mislead homeowners; they lack the crucial management and communication skills necessary for good outcomes. Take the example of homeowners who want a different bathroom tile than the one initially specified. If the contractor orders the tile but doesn't tally the cost until after installation, it may add an unexpected \$500, and the homeowners may feel like they've been gouged.

The professionally managed company doesn't make such mistakes. Instead, it checks the cost of the new tile and its effect on the schedule, presents the numbers to the homeowners on a standard change order, and doesn't order the tile until the homeowners have signed off

on it.

Change orders or any other issues are quickly resolved if there's mutual trust between the homeowner and the builder, which is why hiring a trustworthy pro is so important. And one trait of such a pro is great communication systems. **BG**



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