

Ask Questions of Your Home Builder

Lots of people like to go through model homes. Some go to imagine the home of their dreams, others go to look for interior decorating ideas to see what's new, and the rest are there to buy a new home.

You might think that the sales person is there just to sell you a home, but he or she should be considered as a source of information on the home, development and the area. Besides the questions of "how much does it cost?," and "when can we move in?," here are some other questions to ask when considering buying a home.

- Ask the builder if they are a member of their local Home Builders Association. If not, why not? Because being a member of their local professional association means that they stay up-to-date on local rules, regulations and codes and avail themselves of continuing education courses to continually improve in their trade.
- Will the builder give you references of recent buyers/occupants?
- Does the builder have a financing plan established?
- Are there options in the floor plan? Can a basement, deck, etc. be added?.
- Can a room be left unfinished?
- How much "customizing" can be done versus standard features?
- Can appliances be up- or down-graded?
- Are there any additional fees relating to the home or development?
- Does the builder offer a warranty program?
- Does the price include landscaping, and what if the plants die within a year?
- Are there any restrictive covenants?
- What are the estimated taxes on the property?
- How is the school system rated?
- Are day care and grocery stores convenient and satisfactory?
- Are emergency facilities such as police, fire and hospital close?
- Are there any major development plans for the area in the next five years?
- If you have the opportunity, tour the homes showcased in the annual Parade of Homes to get an idea of the types and quality of construction available in the region.
- Check with the NC Licensing Board for General Contractors <http://www.ncibgc.net/> and the Better Business Bureau of Coastal Carolina <http://www.carolina.bbb.org/> to see if any charges have been filed against your builder.

You have a right to and need to ask every question you think is important. A little research with the neighbors also is a good idea. Remember, a professional builder and sales representative will want you to be a happy and satisfied homeowner. The next sale could depend on your reference.