

## The Home Book: A Complete Guide to Homeowner and Homebuilder Responsibilities

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*The Home Book replaces personal opinions related to construction quality and workmanship in residential homebuilding with clear written guidelines.*

Not sure who to call when there's a problem with your new home? *The Home Book* provides more than 380 performance guidelines for owners of new and remodeled homes. If the floorboards are uneven, is that the homeowner's responsibility or the builder's? What about a window that sticks or a cupboard that sags? This book replaces personal opinions related to construction quality and workmanship in residential homebuilding with clear written guidelines.

Intended to be used as a reference manual, *The Home Book* is divided into nine chapters each with related conditions (problems), the industry-accepted performance guidelines, and the responsibilities of both the builder and the homeowner. In addition, there is a summary of homeowner maintenance requirements, a glossary of homebuilder construction terms, and a list of contractor regulation and oversight agencies. The work of electricians, plumbers, and other subcontractors is included, although most of the book deals with building construction.

The book's organization is not always intuitive. For example, chimneys and flues are covered in Exterior Components, but fireplaces are in Interior Components. Showers and tub enclosures are also in Interior Components, but shower heads and bathroom faucets are found in the Plumbing section a chapter later. Many of the performance guidelines provide useful information—for example, the acceptable size of a crack in a concrete slab. In some cases, the format generates repetition and the guidelines are obvious: "Tiles should not be loose or fall from the roof" or "Toilets should not leak from the floor." The Green Tips appear to have been added at the last minute and will not add to most homeowners' knowledge.

The book is targeted at homeowners who have just moved into a new home or completed a major remodel. It will be useful as a manual accompanying a builder's warranty or to prepare a homeowner for a successful walk-through.

A secondary purpose of the manual is to identify essential tasks for the new homeowner. A short Homeowner Maintenance Summary suggests a timeline for tasks like re-caulking bathroom joints and cleaning furnace filters. Maintenance Alerts throughout the book highlight additional homeowner responsibilities. This book is not for those seeking a how-to book on home maintenance.

The contents were vetted by national building organizations and reviewed by law firms that represent homebuilders and homeowners. *The Home Book* is a thorough guide for a narrow audience. It will be most useful to those seeking to evaluate the workmanship in their new or newly remodeled homes.

KAREN ACKLAND (October 25, 2013)

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