



Guide to working with your builder

THE MASTER BUILDER DIFFERENCE

Master Builders are proud to have their work **independently inspected**, and for their business to be professionally vetted when they join the Federation of Master Builders (FMB).

Becoming a member demonstrates that they meet the **high standards** expected of a Master Builder. All of our members sign up to work within the guidelines set out in the **FMB Code of Conduct**. This means you can build with confidence with a Master Builder.

A successful building project relies on a good working partnership and open communication between you and your builder. Both of you should have confidence in each other, which means it is important for you to be aware of your responsibilities as a client.

fmb.org.uk

Guide to working with your builder

Start planning early

Quality builders are in high demand, which means you may have to wait several months for them to be available.

Consider property value

Think about the value of the building work in proportion to the overall property value. For example, does installing an expensive top-of-the-range kitchen in a small flat make financial sense? Will you stay in the property long enough to see a return on your investment?

Check your builder's credibility

Check that the building company you want to hire is a current FMB member (visit www.fmb.org.uk/find-a-builder/check-a-member), and a TrustMark member (visit trustmark.org.uk) if they are also displaying that logo. If a builder is displaying the FMB logo but is not a member, alert us via: trademarks@fmb.org.uk

Check building regulations

As the property owner, it is your responsibility to make sure the correct building regulations, planning and environmental permissions, and Party Wall Agreements are in place for the work to your home. Your builder can advise on this, but it is ultimately the homeowner's responsibility. For more information on building regulations visit www.planningportal.co.uk



Plan your budget

Remember to take additional expenses into account, such as the cost for decorating, new appliances, new flooring, parking permits, etc. Unless these are in the builder's quote, you should ensure you allow for these expenses, which can add up. It is also important to allow for a contingency in case of unforeseen expenditures during building works - at least 10% is advisable.

Sign a written contract

Make sure you sign a contract before the work starts. It should cover:

- The correct building regulations and planning and environmental permissions.
- Precise details of all building works.
- Delegation of the Health & Safety responsibilities (CDM Regulations). More information is available at www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/index
- An agreed process on how changes to the project will be documented and dealt with, as they can have a big impact on the scheduling of work and can often lead to cost increases.
- Agreement on how you will pay the builder and when (e.g. staged payments).
- Details for the individual within the building firm who will be your main point of contact.

All Master Builders have access to fair, jargon-free, easy-to-use contract templates.

Consider site access

Consider the property access routes and make it clear if there are special requirements that might affect the work such as parking restrictions, needs of family members or neighbours that the builders should be aware of. Home security, storage and disposal of waste, as well as use of toilet and washing facilities should also be considered.

Be punctual

Just as you would expect your builder to be on time and to treat you with respect, please show the same courtesy to your builder and their sub-contractors.

Talk to your neighbours

Let your neighbours know that building work is going ahead, how long it will take, and any potential impacts on them. Having builders working nearby can inevitably cause some disruption and this can be stressful, particularly for elderly or vulnerable people, those who do shift work or work from home, or have young children. You can help the building process run smoothly if you are considerate and keep neighbours informed. Your builder should be respectful of your neighbour's needs, as set out in the FMB Code of Conduct.

Speak up

If you have any concerns before, during or after building work, it is important to raise these directly with your main point of contact as soon as possible, so that issues can be discussed and resolved early on. If the problem cannot be resolved between you and a Master Builder, the FMB may be able to assist through its free dispute resolution service.

Pay on time

Pay on time and in accordance with the terms of the signed contract. Building materials and labour are expensive and payment delays may slow down work. Never pay the whole cost of the work upfront, but a deposit to cover the cost of purchasing materials may be requested (up to 10%). Record any deposit payments in writing.

Understand your warranty

If a warranty is in place, read the policy documents carefully. If it is an FMB warranty, you can contact FMB Insurance (fmbinsurance.co.uk) for advice. You must submit confirmation of any deposit paid within 28 days to ensure the payment is protected under the warranty terms. If any defects or damage caused by the builder are discovered during or after the building works, your builder is responsible for returning to your property to rectify the problems. Failure to allow your builder reasonable access is contrary to consumer law and may invalidate any warranty.

Review your builder's work

When work is complete and you have walked through the project with your builder, received any certificates, warranty documents or instructions, and discussed how to deal with snagging items, you are ready to pay the final bill. Don't forget to give your builder a positive review online, send a testimonial to the FMB or support a nomination for the FMB's Master Builder Awards when they next open.

Be proud of your home

Invite your neighbours over to see the completed works, particularly if they have had to put up with disruption during the build.

Build better with a Master Builder

Master Builders are:

- ◆ Professional builders
- ◆ Independently inspected and vetted on joining
- ◆ Able to offer a warranty and contract for every project
- ◆ Committed to abide by our Code of Conduct

Use the FMB's online **Find a Builder** service to start your search for a local Master Builder so you can **build with confidence**:

www.fmb.org.uk/fab



Follow us on social media



@fmbuilders



@federationofmasterbuilders



Federation of Master Builders

fmb.org.uk