

Glossary of Terms:

A/C:	An abbreviation for air conditioner or air conditioning.
A/C Circuit:	Alternating Current; the flow of current through a conductor first in one direction, then in reverse. It is used exclusively in residential and commercial wiring because it provides greater flexibility in voltage selection and simplicity of equipment design.
A/C Condenser:	Outside fan unit of the air conditioning system; it removes the heat from the Freon gas and turns the gas back into a liquid and pumps the liquid back to the coil in the furnace.
A/C Disconnect:	The main electrical ON-OFF switch near the A/C condenser.
ABS:	Rigid black plastic pipe used only for drain lines.
Absolute Humidity:	Amount of moisture in the air, indicated in grains per cubic foot
Accelerator:	Any material added to stucco, plaster or mortar which speeds up the natural set.
Access Panel:	An opening in the wall or ceiling near the fixture that allows access for servicing the plumbing/electrical system.
Acre:	43,560 square feet.
Acrylic:	A glassy thermoplastic material that is vacuum-formed to cast and mold shapes that form the surface of fiberglass bathtubs, whirlpools, shower bases, and shower stalls.
Activate:	To turn on, supply power, or enable systems, equipment, or devices to become active by normal operating controls. Examples include turning on the gas or water supply valves to the fixtures and appliances and activating electrical breakers or fuses.
Adaptor:	A fitting that unites different types of pipe together, e.g. ABS to cast iron pipe.
Adhesion:	The property of a coating or sealant to bond to the surface to which it is applied.
Adhesive Failure:	Loss of bond of a coating or sealant from the surface to which it is applied.
Adversely Affect:	Constitute, or potentially constitute, a negative or destructive impact.
Aerator:	An apparatus that mixes air into flowing water. It is attached to the end of a faucet spout to help reduce splashing.
Aggregate:	Crushed stone, slag or water-worn gravel that comes in a wide range of sizes which is used to surface built-up roofs.
Air Chamber:	A vertical, air-filled pipe that prevents water hammer by absorbing pressure when water is shut off at a faucet or valve.
Air Duct:	Ducts; usually made of sheet metal, carry cooled or heated air to all rooms.

Air Filters:	Adhesive filters made of metal or various fibers that are coated with an adhesive liquid to which particles of lint and dust adhere. These filters will remove as much as 90% of the dirt if they do not become clogged. The more common filters are throwaway or disposable types.
Air Infiltration:	Amount of air leaking in / out of a building through cracks in walls, windows and doors.
Air Space:	Area between insulation facing and interior of exterior wall coverings. Normally a 1" air gap.
Air-Dried Lumber:	Lumber that has been piled in yards or sheds for any length of time. For the United States as a whole, the minimum moisture content of thoroughly air dried lumber is 12 to 15 percent and the average is somewhat higher. In the South, air dried lumber may be no lower than 19 percent.
Airway:	A space between roof insulation and roof boards provided for movement of air.
Alarm System:	Warning devices, installed or free-standing, including but not limited to: carbon monoxide detectors, flue gas and other spillage detectors, security equipment, ejector pumps and smoke alarms.
Alligatoring:	A condition of paint or aged asphalt brought about by the loss of volatile oils and the oxidation caused by solar radiation. Causes a coarse checking pattern characterized by a slipping of the new paint coating over the old coating to the extent that the old coating can be seen through the fissures. "Alligatoring" produces a pattern of cracks resembling an alligator hide and is ultimately the result of the limited tolerance of paint or asphalt to thermal expansion or contraction.
Allowable Span:	The distance between two supporting points for load bearing lumber such as joists, rafters or a girder.
Aluminum Wire:	A conductor made of aluminum for carrying electricity. Aluminum is generally limited to the larger wire sizes. Due to its lower conductivity, aluminum wire smaller than No. 12 is not made. Aluminum is lighter and less expensive than copper, but does not conduct as well. It also breaks easily.
Amortization:	A payment plan by which a loan is reduced through monthly payments of principal and interest.
Ampacity:	Refers to the how much current a wire can safely carry. For example, a 12 gauge electrical copper wire can safely carry up to 20 amps.
Amperage:	The rate of flow of electricity through wire - measured in terms of amperes.
Amps (AMPERES):	The rate at which electricity flows through a conductor.
Anchor Bolts:	In residential construction, bolts used to secure a wooden sill plate to a concrete or masonry floor or wall. In commercial construction, bolts which fasten columns, girders or other members to concrete or masonry such as bolts used to anchor sills to masonry foundation.
Angle Iron:	A piece of iron that forms a right angle and is used to span openings and support masonry at the openings. In brick veneer, they are used to secure the veneer to the foundation. Also known as shelf angle.

Angle Stop:	A shutoff valve in which the inlet connects to the water supply pipe in the wall and the outlet angles 90 degrees upward toward the faucet or toilet. Annealing: In the manufacturing of float glass, the process of controlled cooling done in a Lahr to prevent residual stresses in the glass. Re-annealing is the process of removing objectionable stresses in glass by re-heating to a suitable temperature followed by controlled cooling.
APR:	(Annual Percentage Rate) Annual cost of credit over the life of a loan, including interest, service charges, points, loan fees, mortgage insurance, and other items.
Anti-Scald:	A valve that restricts water flow to help prevent burn injuries. See Pressure Balancing Valve and Thermostatic Valve. In some areas, plumbing codes require anti scald valves. Speak to a professional in your area for more information and help with code requirements.
Anti-Siphon:	A device that prevents waste water from being drawn back into supply lines and possibly contaminating the water supply.
Anti-Walk Blocks:	Elastomeric blocks that limit lateral glass movement in the glazing channel which may result from thermal, seismic, wind load effects, building movement, and other forces that may apply.
Antiquated:	No longer in use, useful or functioning, as in most home inspection associations. Obsolete.
APA Plywood:	(APA=American Plywood Association) Plywood that has been rated by the American Plywood Association. For example, number one APA rated exterior plywood contains no voids between laminate layers.
Aperture:	The opening in pipes.
Appliance:	A household device operated by use of electricity or gas. Not included in this definition are components covered under central heating, central cooling or plumbing.
Appraisal:	An expert valuation of property.
Approach:	The area between the sidewalk and the street that leads to a driveway or the transition from the street as you approach a driveway.
Apron:	A trim board that is installed beneath a window sill.
Arbitration Service:	A service to resolve complaints, as in NACHI's Arbitration Service.
Architect:	A tradesman who designs and produces plans for buildings, often overseeing the building process.
Architects Rule (Ruler):	Three sided ruler with different scales on each side. Also referred to as a "scale."
Architectural Service:	Any practice involving the art and science of building design for construction of any structure or grouping of structures and the use of space within and surrounding the structures or the design, design development, preparation of construction contract documents, and administration of the construction contract
Area Wells:	Corrugated metal or concrete barrier walls installed around a basement window to hold back the earth.

Areaway:	An open subsurface space adjacent to a building used to admit light/air or as a means of access to a basement.
Asphalt:	A dark brown to black highly viscous hydrocarbon produced from the residue left after the distillation of petroleum. Asphalt is used on roofs and highways as a waterproofing agent.
Assessment:	A tax levied on a property, or a value placed on the worth of a property.
Astragal:	A molding which is attached to one of a pair of swinging doors against which the other door strikes.
Attic Access:	An opening that is placed in the dry-walled ceiling of a home providing access to the attic.
Attic Ventilators:	In houses, screened openings provided to ventilate an attic space. They are located in the soffit area as inlet ventilators and in the gable end or along the ridge as outlet ventilators. They can also consist of power-driven fans used as an exhaust system.
Auger:	In carpentry, a wood-boring tool used by a carpenter to bore holes.
Awning Window:	A window with hinges at the top allowing it to open out and up.
Back Nailing:	The practice of nailing roofing felts to the deck under the overlap, in addition to hot mopping, to prevent slippage of felts.
Backer Rod:	In glazing, a polyethylene or polyurethane foam material installed under compression and used to control sealant joint depth, provide a surface for sealant tooling, serve as a bond breaker to prevent three-sided adhesion, and provide an hour-glass contour of the finished bead.
Backfill:	The slope of the ground adjacent to the house. In any previously excavated area, i.e., the replacement of excavated earth into a trench around and against a basement foundation. In carpentry, the process of fastening together two pieces of board by gluing blocks of wood in the interior angle.
Backflow:	Movement of water (or other liquid) in any direction other than that intended.
Backflow Preventer:	A device or means to prevent backflow into the potable water supply.
Backhand:	A simple molding sometimes used around the outer edge of plain rectangular casing as a decorative feature.
Backhoe:	Self-powered excavation equipment that digs by pulling a boom mounted bucket towards itself. It is used to dig basements and/or footings and to install drainage or sewer systems.
Backout:	Work the framing contractor does after the mechanical subcontractors (Heating-Plumbing-Electrical) finish their phase of work at the rough (before insulation) stage to get the home ready for a municipal frame inspection. Generally, the framing contractor repairs anything disturbed by others and completes all framing necessary to pass a rough Frame Inspection.
Backsplash:	A raised integral portion of a wall mount sink or lavatory located at the rear to protect the wall.
Balancing Damper:	Baffle or plate used to control the volume of flowing air in a confined area.

Balloon Framing:	In carpentry, the lightest and most economical form of construction in which the studding and corner plates are set up in continuous lengths from the first floor line or sill to the roof plate to which all floor joists are fastened.
Balusters:	Usually small vertical members in a railing used between a top rail and the stair treads or a bottom rail.
Balustrade:	A railing made up of balusters, top rail, and sometimes bottom rail, used on the edge of stairs, teal conies, and porches.
Barge:	Horizontal beam rafter that supports shorter rafters.
Barge Board:	A decorative board covering the projecting rafter (fly rafter) of the gable end. At the cornice, this member is a facie board.
Barometer:	Instrument for measuring atmospheric pressure.
Barrel Roof:	A roof design which in a cross section is arched.
Base Flashing:	The upturned edge of a watertight membrane formed at a roof termination point by the extension of the felts vertically over the cant strip and up the wall for a varying distance where they are secured with mechanical fasteners.
Base Molding:	Molding used to trim the upper edge of interior baseboard.
Base Ply:	An asphalt-saturated and/or coated felt installed as the first ply with 4 inch laps in a built-up roof system under the following felts which can be installed in a shingle-like fashion.
Base Shoe:	Molding used next to the floor on interior base board. Sometimes called a carpet strip.
Baseboard:	Usually wood or vinyl installed around the perimeter of a room to cover the space where the wall and floor meet. A board placed against the wall around a room next to the floor to properly finish between the floor and the plaster.
Baseboard Heat:	A heating system with the heating unit located along the perimeter of the wall where the baseboard would normally be located. It can be either an electric or hot water system.
Basement Window Inserts:	The window frame and glass unit that is installed in the window buck.
Basket Strainer:	Basket shaped strainer with holes allowing water to drain while catching food or other solids. Can also be closed to fill the sink with water.
Batt Insulation:	Strips of insulation, usually fiberglass, that fit between studs or other framing.
Batten:	Narrow strips of wood used to cover joints or as decorative vertical members over plywood or wide boards.
Batten Plate:	A formed piece of metal designed to cover the joint between two lengths of metal edge.
Batter Board:	One of a pair of horizontal boards nailed to posts set at the corners of an excavation, used to indicate the desired level, also used as a fastening for stretched strings to indicate outlines of foundation walls.

Batter Boards:	Temporary structures that hold strings used to locate and square the corners of a building.
Bay Window:	Any window space projecting outward from the walls of a building, either square or polygonal in plan.
Bead:	In glazing, an applied sealant in a joint irrespective of the method of application, such as caulking bead, glazing bead, etc. Also a molding or stop used to hold glass or panels in position.
Beam:	A supporting member either of wood or steel. Structural support member (steel, concrete, lumber) transversely supporting a load that transfers weight from one location to another.
Bearing Header:	(a) A beam placed perpendicular to joists and to which joists are nailed in framing for a chimney, stairway, or other opening. (b) A wood lintel. (c) The horizontal structural member over an opening (for example over a door or window).
Bearing Partition:	A partition that supports any vertical load in addition to its own weight.
Bearing Point:	A point where a bearing or structural weight is concentrated and transferred to the foundation.
Bearing Wall:	A wall that supports any vertical load in addition to its own weight.
Bed Molding:	A molding in an angle, as between the overhanging cornice or eaves of a building and the side walls.
Bed or Bedding:	In glazing, the bead compound or sealant applied between a light of glass or panel and the stationary stop or sight bar of the sash or frame. It is usually the first bead of compound or sealant to be applied when setting glass or panels.
Bedrock:	A subsurface layer of earth that is suitable to support a structure.
Bell Reducer:	In plumbing, a fitting shaped like a bell which has one opening of a smaller diameter used to reduce the size of the pipe in the line, and the opposite opening of larger diameter.
Below Grade:	The portion of a building that is below ground level.
Bent Glass:	Flat glass that has been shaped while hot into curved shapes.
Bevel:	The angle of the front edge of a door usually from 1/8" to 2."
Bevel Siding:	Wedge-shaped boards used as horizontal siding in a lapped pattern. This siding varies in butt thickness from 1/2 to 3/4 inch and in widths up to 12 inches. Normally used over some type of sheathing.
Bid:	A formal offer by a contractor, in accordance with specifications for a project, to do all or a phase of the work at a certain price in accordance with the terms and conditions stated in the offer.
Bi-fold Door:	Doors that are hinged in the middle to allow them to open in a smaller area than standard swing doors. Often used for closet doors.

Binder:	A receipt for a deposit to secure the right to purchase a home at an agreed terms by a buyer and seller.
Bi-pass Doors:	Doors that slide by each other. Commonly used as closet doors.
Bird's-Mouth Cut:	A cutout in a rafter where it crosses the top plate of the wall providing a bearing surface for nailing. Also called a heel cut.
Bite:	The dimension by which the framing system overlaps the edge of the glazing infill.
Bitumen:	Any of various mixtures of hydrocarbons occurring naturally or obtained through the distillation of coal or petroleum. (See Coat Tar Pitch and Asphalt).
Blankets:	Fiber-glass or rock-wool insulation that comes in long rolls 15 or 23 inches wide.
Bleeding:	The migration of a liquid to the surface of a component or into/onto an adjacent material.
Blind Nailing:	Nailing in such a way that the nail heads are not visible on the face of the work—usually at the tongue of matched boards.
Blind Stop:	A rectangular molding, usually $\frac{3}{4}$ by 1-3/8 inches or more in width, used in the assembly of a window frame. Serves as a stop for storm and screen or combination windows and to resist air infiltration.
Blister:	An enclosed raised spot evident on the surface of a building. They are mainly caused by the expansion of trapped air, water vapor, moisture or other gases.
Block Out:	To install a box or barrier within a foundation wall to prevent the concrete from entering an area. For example, foundation walls are sometimes "blocked" in order for mechanical pipes to pass through the wall, to install a crawl space door, or to depress the concrete at a garage door location.
Blocking:	In carpentry, the process of fastening together two pieces of board by gluing blocks of wood in the interior angle.
Blow Insulation:	Fiber insulation in loose form used to insulate attics and existing walls where framing members are not exposed.
Blue Prints:	Architectural plans for a building or construction project, which likely include floor plans, footing and foundation plans, elevations, plot plans, and various schedules and or details.
Blue Stake:	Also Utility Notification. When a utility company (telephone, gas, electric, cable TV, sewer and water, etc) comes to the job site and locates and spray paints the ground and/or installs small flags to show where their service is located underground.
Board and Batten:	A method of siding in which the joints between vertically placed boards or plywood are covered by narrow strips of wood.
Board Foot:	The volume of a piece of wood measuring 12 inches square and in inch thick. A piece of lumber 1/2" thick and 6 inches wide and 24 inches long is equal to one board foot.
Boards:	Yard lumber less than 2 inches thick and 2 or more inches wide.

Bolster:	A short horizontal timber or steel beam on top of a column to support and decrease the span of beams or girders.
Bond Breaker:	A substance or a tape applied between two adjoining materials to prevent adhesion between them.
Bond or Bonding:	An amount of money (usually \$5,000-\$10,000) which must be on deposit with a governmental agency in order to secure a contractor's license. The bond may be used to pay for the unpaid bills or disputed work of the contractor. Not to be confused with a performance bond. They are an insurance policy which guarantees proper completion of a project. Such bonds are rarely used in residential construction.
Bond Plaster:	In addition to gypsum, bond plaster contains 2-5% lime by weight and chemical additives which improve the bond with dense non-porous surfaces such as concrete. It is used as a base coat.
Bonding Strip:	A thin strip of metal inside armored or BX cable; meant to back up the primary ground. (Electrical)
Boom:	A truck used to hoist heavy material up and into place, to put trusses on a home or to set a heavy beam into place.
Boston Ridge:	A method of applying asphalt or wood shingles at the ridge or at the hips of a roof as a finish.
Bottom Chord:	The lower or bottom horizontal member of a truss.
Bottom Plate:	The 2x4s or 6s that lay on the subfloor upon which the vertical studs are installed. Also called the sole plate.
Bow:	A curve, bend, warping or other deviation from flatness in glass or wood.
Box Cornice:	A cornice completely closed with trim work.
Brace:	An inclined piece of framing lumber applied to wall or floor to stiffen the structure. Often used on walls as temporary bracing until framing has been completed.
Bracing:	Ties and rods used for supporting and strengthening various parts of a building used for lateral stability for columns and beams.
Brake Metal:	Sheet metal that has been bent to the desired configuration.
Branch Circuit:	Wiring that runs from a service panel or sub-panel to outlets. Branch circuits are protected by fuses or breakers at the panel. (Electrical)
Breaker Box:	A metal box that contains circuit breakers or fuses that control the electrical current in a home.
Breaker Panel:	The electrical box that distributes electric power entering the home to each branch circuit (each plug and switch) and composed of circuit breakers.
Breeze Way:	A roofed, open-sided passageway connecting two structures, such as a house and a garage.
Brick Ledge:	Part of the foundation wall where brick (vener) will rest.

Brick Lintel:	The metal angle iron that brick rests on, especially above a window, door, or other opening.
Brick Mold:	Trim used around an exterior door jamb onto which siding butts.
Brick Tie:	A small, corrugated metal strip (1"x6"- 8" long) nailed to wall sheathing or studs. They are inserted into the grout mortar joint of the veneer brick, and hold the veneer wall to the sheeted wall behind it.
Brick Veneer:	A facing of brick laid against and fastened to the sheathing of a frame wall or tile wall construction.
Bridging:	Small wood or metal members that are inserted in a diagonal position between the floor joists at midspan to act as both tension and compression members for the purpose of bracing the joists a spreading the action of loads.
Broker:	One that acts as an agent for others, as in negotiating contracts, purchases, or sales in return for a fee or commission.
Browncoat:	The coat of plaster directly beneath the finish coat. In three-coat work, the brown is the second coat.
BTU:	A measure of the capacity of a heating or cooling system. Abbreviation of British Thermal Unit. The amount of heat energy required to raise the temperature of one pound of water through a change of one degree Fahrenheit.
Bubbling:	In glazing, open or closed pockets in a sealant caused by release, production or expansion of gasses.
Buck:	Often used in reference to rough frame opening members. Door bucks used in reference to metal door frame.
Buckling:	The bending of a building material as a result of wear and tear or contact with a substance such as water.
Building Brick:	Brick for building purposes not especially treated for texture or color, formerly called "common brick." It is stronger than face brick.
Building Code:	Minimum local or state regulations established to protect health and safety. They apply to building design, construction, rehabilitation, repair, materials, occupancy and use. Community ordinances governing the manner in which a home may be constructed or modified.
Building Paper:	A general term for papers, felts and similar sheet materials used in buildings without reference to their properties or uses. Generally comes in long rolls.
Building Permit:	Written authorization from the city, county or other governing regulatory body giving permission to construct or renovate a building. A building permit is specific to the building project described in the application.
Built-Up Beam (or Girder):	Beam (or girder) created by sistering or "scabbing" two or more pieces of lumber together.

Built-Up Roof:	A roofing composed of three to five layers of asphalt felt laminated with coal tar, pitch, or asphalt. The top is finished with crushed slag or gravel. Generally used on flat or low-pitched roofs.
Bull Nose (Drywall):	Rounded drywall corners.
Bullfloat:	A tool used to finish and flatten a slab. After screeding, the first stage in the final finish of concrete, smoothes and levels hills and voids left after screeding. Sometimes substituted for darbying. A large flat or tool usually of wood, aluminum or magnesium with a handle.
Bundle:	A package of shingles. There are 3, 4 or 5 bundles per square.
Bushing:	A pipe fitting for joining pipes with different diameters. A bushing is threaded on the inside and outside.
Butt Glazing:	The installation of glass products where the vertical glass edges are without structural supporting mullions.
Butt Joint:	The junction where the ends of two timbers or other members meet in a square-cut joint.
Butterfly Roof:	A roof assembly, which pitches sharply from either side toward the center.
Buttering:	In glazing, application of sealant or compound to the flat surface of some member before ember in position, such as the buttering of a removable stop before fastening the stop in place.
BX Cable:	Armored electrical cable wrapped in galvanized steel outer covering. A factory assembly of insulated conductors inside a flexible metallic covering. It can be run anywhere except where exposed to excessive moisture. It should not be run below grade. It must always be grounded and uses its armor as an equipment ground. It is difficult to pull out old wires or insert new ones.
Caisson:	A 10" or 12" diameter hole drilled into the earth and embedded into bedrock 3 - 4 feet. The structural support for a type of foundation wall, porch, patio, monopost, or other structure. Two or more "sticks" of reinforcing bars (rebar) are inserted into and run the full length of the hole and concrete is poured into the caisson hole.
Calcium Chloride:	A chemical used to speed up curing of concrete in damp conditions.
Calibrate:	To check, adjust, or determine by comparison with a standard (the graduations of a quantitative measuring instrument): calibrate a thermometer.
Calibration:	The act or process of calibrating or the state of being calibrated.
Camber:	A slightly arched surface, as of a road, a ship's deck, an airfoil, or a snow ski.
Camber Arch:	An arch whose intrados, though apparently straight, has a slightly concave curve upward.
Camber Beam:	A beam whose under side has a concave curve upward.
Camber Windows:	Casement windows with a curved top.
Canopy:	An overhanging roof.

Cant Strip:	A beveled support used at the junction of a flat surface and a vertical surface to prevent bends and/or cracking of the roofing membrane at the intersection of the roof deck and wall. Used with a base flashing to minimize breaking of the roofing felts.
Cantilever:	A projecting beam or other structure supported only at one end. Any part of a structure that projects beyond its main support and is balanced on it.
Cantilevered Void:	Foundation void material used in unusually expansive soil conditions. This void is "trapezoid" shaped and has vertical sides of 6" and 4" respectively.
Cap:	The upper member of a column, pilaster, door cornice, molding, and the like.
Cap Flashing:	The portion of the flashing attached to a vertical surface to prevent water from migrating behind the base flashing.
Cap Sheet:	A top layer in built-up roofing.
Cap Sheets:	In roofing, one to four plies of felt bonded and top-coated with bitumen that is laid over an existing roof as a treatment for defective roofs.
Cape Chisel:	Tool used to clean out mortar joints on brick.
Carbon Monoxide:	CO. A colorless, odorless, highly poisonous gas formed by the incomplete combustion of carbon.
Casement Frames and Sash:	Frames of wood or metal enclosing part or all of the sash, which may be opened by means of hinges affixed to the vertical edges.
Casement Window:	A side hinged window that opens on hinges secured to the side of the window frame.
Casing:	Molding of various widths and thicknesses used to trim door and window openings at the jambs.
Cast Iron:	Heavy metal formed by casting on molds. The metal is covered with a porcelain enamel coating to make fixtures such as the cast iron tubs.
Cast-Iron Pipe:	Drain and vent lines. Most older drain-waste venting systems are made of cast-iron pipes. Now increasingly supplanted by ABS and PVC. Pipes were originally joined with molten lead, but most plumbers now join them with no hub couplers.
Cat's Paw:	A variation of a pry bar used to pry up deep set (counter sunk) nails.
Catch Basin:	A drain for a low or wet spot, with pipe exiting the side and a pit at the bottom to collect sediment.
Caulk:	The application of sealant to a joint, crack or crevice. A compound used for sealing that has minimum joint movement capability; sometimes called low performance sealant.
Caulking:	Material used to seal exterior cracks and openings such as windows or foundations.
Ceiling Joist:	One of a series of parallel framing members used to support ceiling loads and supported in turn by larger beams, girders or bearing walls. Also called roof joists.

Cellulose Insulation:	Ground-up newspaper that is treated with a fire retardant.
Celotex™:	Black fibrous board that is used as exterior sheathing.
Cement:	The gray powder that is the "glue" in concrete. Portland cement. Also, any adhesive.
Cement Mixtures:	Rich - 1 part cement, 2 parts sand, 3 parts coarse aggregate. Used for concrete roads and waterproof structures. Standard - 1 part cement, 2 parts sand, 4 parts coarse aggregate. Used for reinforced work floors, roofs, columns, arches, tanks, sewers, conduits, etc. Medium - 1 part cement, 2 1/2 parts sand, 5 parts coarse aggregate. Used for foundations, walls, abutments, piers, etc. Lean - 1 part cement, 3 parts sand, 6 parts coarse aggregate. Used for all mass concrete work, large foundations, backing for stone masonry, etc. Mixtures are always listed Cement to Sand to Aggregate.
Centerset:	A style of faucet that is installed on a lavatory with 4" center-to-center faucet holes and that has the spout and handle(s) combined into a single part.
Ceramic Disk Valve:	A type of valve that relies on two-part revolving disks in a sealed cylinder. Each disk has a port in it that, when aligned with the other, will allow water to pass through.
Ceramic Tile:	A man-made or machine-made clay tile used to finish a floor or wall. Generally used in bathtub and shower enclosures and on counter tops.
Chair Rail:	A molding that runs horizontally along the wall at about 3 feet from the ground. In storefront, window wall, or curtain wall systems, a chair rail is an aluminum extrusion applied horizontally to the inside of the system 3 feet from the floor to create a barrier in floor-to-ceiling glazing applications.
Chalk Line:	A line made on the roof by snapping a taut string or cord dusted with chalk. Used for alignment purposes.
Channel Glazing:	The installation of glass products into U-shaped glazing channels. The channels may have fixed stops; however, at least one glazing stop on one edge must be removable.
Chase:	A framed enclosed space around a flue pipe or a channel in a wall or through a ceiling for something to lie in or pass through.
Checking:	Fissures that appear with age in many exterior paint coatings. At first superficial, but in time may penetrate entirely through the coating. It produces a pattern of surface cracks running in irregular lines. When found in the top pour of an asphalt built-up roof, checking is the preliminary stage of alligatoring. Checkrails: Meeting rails sufficiently thicker than a window to fill the opening between the top and bottom sash made by the parting stop in the frame of double-hung windows. They are usually beveled.
Chemical Injection Grouting:	Leak repair technique usually used below grade in cracks and joints in concrete walls and floors that involves the injection of sealant (usually urethane) that reacts with water to form a seal.
Chip Board:	A manufactured wood panel made out of 1"- 2" wood chips and glue. Often used as a substitute for plywood in the exterior wall and roof sheathing. Also called OSB (Oriented Strand Board) or Wafer Board.

Circuit:	A network of wiring that typically commences at a panel box, feeds electricity to outlets and ultimately returns to the panel box.
Circuit Breaker:	A protective device which automatically opens an electrical circuit when it is overloaded.
Cistern:	Reservoir for water. Common in houses built prior to the fifties in the Midwest.
Class "A" Fire Resistance:	The highest fire-resistance rating for roofing per ASTM E- 108. Indicates that roofing is able to withstand severe exposure to fire originating from sources outside the building.
Class "B" Fire Resistance:	Fire-resistance rating that indicates roofing material is able to withstand moderate exposure to fire originating from sources outside the building.
Class "C" Fire Resistance:	Fire-resistance rating that indicates roofing material is able to withstand light exposure to fire originating from sources outside the building.
Class B Door:	A fire resistant rating applied by the Underwriters Laboratories Classification for a door having a 1 to 1 1/2 hour rating.
Cleanout:	A plug in a trap or drain pipe that provides access for the purpose of clearing an obstruction.
Cleanout (Plumbing):	A drain fitting, usually a wye or a tee, with a removable plug to permit inspection and access for an auger or snake.
Cleat:	A wedge-shaped piece (usually of metal) which serves as a support or check. A strip fastened across something to give strength or hold something in position.
Clip Ties:	Sharp cut metal wires that protrude out of a concrete foundation wall that at one time held the foundation form panels in place.
Closed Cut Valley:	A method of valley treatment in which shingles from one side of the valley extend across the valley, while shingles from the other side are trimmed 2 inches from the valley centerline. The valley flashing is not exposed.
Closet Auger:	A flexible rod with a curved end used to access the toilet's built-in trap and remove clogs.
Closet Bend:	A curved fitting that connects the closet flange to the toilet drain.
Closet Bolts:	Bolt whose head is fitted to a closet flange and protrudes up through a toilet base. A nut is tightened around it on the toilet base. Two (or four) bolts serve one toilet.
Closet Flange:	An anchoring ring secured to the floor. The base of the toilet is secured to this ring with bolts.
Coal Tar:	A viscous liquid mixture of hydrocarbon compounds, derived, along with coke, from the destructive distillation of coal.
Coal Tar Pitch:	A bituminous material, which is a by-product from the coking of coal. It is used as the waterproofing material for tar and gravel built-up roofing.

Cohesive Failure:	Internal splitting of a compound resulting from over-stressing of the compound.
Cold Air Return:	The ductwork (and related grills) that carries room air back to the furnace for re-heating.
Cold Applied:	Products that can be applied without heating. These are in contrast to products which need to be heated to be applied.
Cold Patch:	In roofing, a roof repair done with cold-applied material.
Cold Process Adhesive:	Mastic prepared with SBS modifiers to adhere laps, flashing and joints of built-up or low-slope roofing without hot-mopping or torching equipment.
Cold-Method or Lap Cement:	Special multipurpose adhesive for low-sloped, cold applied roof construction. Bonds 19" selvedge, mineral surface and cap sheets to the underlayment. Doubles as an adhesive on 2" selvedge lap of mineral-, granule- or smooth-surfaced roofing. Available in both summer and winter grades.
Collar:	In roofing, a conical metal cap flashing used in conjunction with vent pipes or stacks usually located several inches above the plane of the roof for the purpose of shedding water away from the base of the vent.
Collar Beam:	In carpentry, a tie that keeps the roof from spreading. They serve to stiffen the roof structure. Connects similar rafters on opposite sides of roof.
Collar Tie:	A horizontal board attached perpendicular to rafters.
Column:	In architecture: A perpendicular supporting member, circular or rectangular in section, usually consisting of a base, shaft, and capital. In engineering: A vertical structural compression member which supports loads acting in the direction of its longitudinal axis.
Combination Doors or Windows:	Combination doors or windows are used over regular openings. They provide winter insulation and summer protection and often have self storing or removable glass and screen inserts. This eliminates the need for handling a different unit each season.
Combustion Air:	The duct work installed to bring fresh, outside air to the furnace and/or hot water heater. Normally 2 separate supplies of air are brought in: one high and one low.
Combustion Chamber:	The part of a boiler, furnace or woodstove where the burn occurs; normally lined with firebrick or molded or sprayed insulation.
Common Rafter:	Rafter that extends from the top plate to the ridge. Generally set 12, 16, or 24 inches apart.
Compatible:	Two or more substances, which can be mixed or blended without separating, reacting, or affecting either material adversely.
Component:	A permanently installed or attached fixture, element or part of a system.
Composite Board:	An insulation board which has two different insulation types laminated together in 2 or 3 layers.

Compression Fitting:	Used to join or connect pipes and conduit by causing a ring to compress against the connecting tube when tightening with a wrench.
Compression Gasket:	A gasket designed to function under compression.
Compression Set:	The permanent deformation of a material after removal of the compressive stress.
Compression Valve:	A type of valve that works by raising or lowering a stem. Water passes through the valve by turning the faucet handle, which causes the stem to drop or rise.
Compression Web:	A member of a truss system which connects the bottom and top chords and which provides downward support.
Compressor:	A mechanical device that pressurizes a gas in order to turn it into a liquid, thereby allowing heat to be removed or added. A compressor is the main component of conventional heat pumps and air conditioners. In an air conditioning system, the compressor normally sits outside and has a large fan (to remove heat).
Concealed Nail Method:	Application of roll roofing in which all nails are driven into the underlying course of roofing and covered by a cemented, overlapping course. Nails are not exposed to the weather.
Concrete Block:	A hollow concrete 'brick' often 8"x8"x16" in size. Often used in low rise commercial and some residential construction. The original design and use is attributed to the architect Frank Lloyd Wright.
Concrete Board:	A panel made out of concrete and fiberglass usually used as a tile backing material.
Concrete Grout:	A mixture of 3/8-inch pea gravel, sand, cement and water which is poured into the cells of concrete-block walls to reinforce them.
Concrete Plain:	Concrete either without reinforcement, or reinforced only for shrinkage or temperature changes.
Condensate Line:	The copper pipe that runs from the outside air conditioning condenser to the inside furnace (where the A/C coil is located).
Condensation:	Water condensing on walls, ceiling and pipes. Normal in areas of high humidity, usually controlled by ventilation or a dehumidifier.
Condensing Unit:	The outdoor component of a cooling system. It includes a compressor and condensing coil designed to give off heat.
Condition:	The visible and conspicuous state of being of an object.
Convenants & Restrictions:	The standards that define how a property may be used and the protections the developer makes for the benefit of all owners in a subdivision.
Conduction:	The flow of heat from one part of a substance to another part. A piece of iron with one end placed in a fire will soon become warm from end to end due to the transfer of heat by the actual collision of the air molecules.

Conductivity:	The rate at which heat is transmitted through a material.
Conductor:	In roofing, a pipe for conveying rainwater from the roof gutter to a drain, or from a roof drain to the storm drain; also called a leader, downspout, or downpipe. In electrical contracting, a wire through which a current of electricity flows, better known as an electric wire.
Conductor (Electrical):	Anything that conducts or carries electricity.
Conduit:	A hollow pipe casing through which electric lines run.
Conduit (Electrical):	Tubing used to protect wiring.
Console Lavatory:	A table-like lavatory in which the basin is attached to a wall at the back and by table or piano legs at the front.
Construction Adhesive:	Thick-bodied adhesive, suited to a wide range of repair and construction tasks. Packaged in convenient cartridges for caulking guns.
Construction Drywall:	A type of construction in which the interior wall finish is applied in a dry condition, generally in the form of sheet materials or wood paneling as contrasted to plaster.
Construction Loan:	A loan provided by a lending institution specifically to construct or renovate a building.
Construction, Frame:	A type of construction in which the structural parts are wood or depend upon a wood frame for support. In codes, if masonry veneer is applied to the exterior walls, the classification of this type of construction is usually unchanged.
Continuing Education:	Ongoing education, often a requirement for membership in a home inspection association. For example, NACHI's Continuing Education Policy.
Continuity Tester:	An electrical tool used to identify and diagnose a circuit as either open or closed.
Contractor:	An individual licensed to perform certain types of construction activities. In most states, the general contractor's license and some specialty contractor's licenses don't require of compliance with bonding, workmen's compensation and similar regulations. Some of the specialty contractor licenses involve extensive training, testing and/or insurance requirements.
. Control Joint:	A control joint controls or accommodates movement in the surface component of a roof.
Convection:	A method of transferring heat by the actual movement of heated molecules, usually by a freestanding unit such as a furnace.
Conventional Loan:	A mortgage loan not insured by a government agency (such as FHA or VA).
Convertibility:	The ability to change a loan from an adjustable rate schedule to a fixed rate schedule.
Cooling Load:	The amount of cooling required to keep a building at a specified temperature during the summer, usually 78° Fahrenheit, regardless of outside temperature.
Cooling Tower:	A large device mounted on roofs, consisting of many baffles over which water is pumped in order to reduce its temperature.

Coped:	Removing the top and bottom flange of the end(s) of a metal I-beam. This is done to permit it to fit within, and bolted to, the web of another I-beam in a "T" arrangement.
Coped Joint:	Cutting and fitting woodwork to an irregular surface.
Coping:	A construction unit placed at the top of the parapet wall to serve as a cover for the wall.
Coping Joint:	The intersection of a roof slope and an exterior vertical wall.
Copper Pipe Types:	Type K has the heaviest or thickest wall and is generally used underground. It has a green stripe. Type L has a medium wall thickness and is most commonly used for water service and for general interior water piping. It has a blue stripe. Type M has a thin wall and many codes permit its use in general water piping installation. It has a red stripe.
Corbel:	The triangular, decorative and supporting member that holds a mantel or horizontal shelf.
Corbel Out:	To build out one or more courses of brick or stone from the face of a wall to form a support for timbers.
Core:	A small section cut from any material to show internal composition.
Corner Bead:	A strip of formed sheet metal, sometimes combined with a strip of metal lath, placed on corners before plastering to reinforce them. Also, a strip of wood finish three-quarters-round or angular placed over a plastered corner for protection.
Corner Boards:	Used as trim for the external corners of a house or other frame structure against which the ends of the siding are finished.
Corner Braces:	Diagonal braces at the corners of frame structure to stiffen and strengthen the wall.
Cornerite:	Metal-mesh lath cut into strips and bent to a right angle. Used in interior corners of walls and ceilings on lath to prevent cracks in plastering.
Cornice:	A horizontal projecting course on the exterior of a building, usually at the base of the parapet. In residential construction, the overhang of a pitched roof at the eave line, usually consisting of a fascia board, a soffit for a closed cornice, and appropriate moldings.
Cornice Return:	The portion of the cornice that returns on the gable end of a house.
Corrosion:	The deterioration of metal by chemical or electrochemical reaction resulting from exposure to weathering, moisture, chemicals or other agents or media.
Corrugated:	Folded or shaped into parallel ridges or furrows so as to form a symmetrically wavy surface.
Cost Breakdown:	A breakdown of all the anticipated costs on a construction or renovation project.
Cost Plus Contract:	See Time and Materials Contract.
Counter Flashing:	The formed metal secured to a wall, curb, or roof top unit to cover and protect the upper edge of a base flashing and its associated fasteners. This type of flashing is usually used in residential construction on chimneys at the roofline to cover shingle flashing and to prevent moisture entry.

Counterfort:	A foundation wall section that strengthens (and is generally perpendicular to) a long section of foundation wall.
Coupling:	In plumbing, a short collar with only inside threads at each end, for receiving the ends of two pipes which are to be fitted and joined together. A right/left coupling is one used to join 2 gas pipes in limited space.
Course:	A single layer of brick or stone or other building material.
Cove Molding:	A molding with a concave face used as trim or to finish interior corners.
Coverage:	Amount of weather protection provided by the roofing material. Depends on number of layers of material between the exposed surface of the roofing and the deck; i.e. single coverage, double coverage, etc.
CPVC:	Plastic water piping.
Crater:	Pit in the surface of concrete resulting from cracking of the mortar due to expansive forces associated with a particle of unsound aggregate or a contaminating material, such as wood or glass.
Crawl Space:	A shallow open area between the floor of a building and the ground, normally enclosed by the foundation wall.
Crawlspace:	The area within the confines of the foundation and between the ground and the underside of the lowest floor structural component.
Cricket:	A peaked saddle construction at the back of a chimney to prevent accumulation of snow and ice and to deflect water around the chimney.
Cripple Stud:	Short stud used as support in wall openings that replaces a normal 93 inch or 96 inch stud.
Cripple Walls:	In a wood-frame house, the section of wall under the house between the concrete foundation and the floor joists. Also called crawl space walls.
Crock:	Used in the ground to hold water for pumping sump pumps.
Cross Tee:	Short metal "T" beam used in suspended ceiling systems to bridge the spaces between the main beams.
Cross-Bridging:	Diagonal bracing between adjacent floor joists, placed near the center of the joist span to prevent joists from twisting.
Crosscutting:	Cutting across the wood grain; to crosscut a board is to cut across its width.
Crown Molding:	A molding used on cornice or wherever an interior angle is to be covered.
Culvert:	Round, corrugated drain pipe (normally 15" or 18" in diameter) that is installed beneath a driveway parallel to and near the street.
Cupola:	A small dome at the peak of a pitched roof.
Cupping:	A type of warping that causes boards to curl up at their edges.

Curb:	A short wall or masonry built above the level of the roof that provides a means of flashing the deck equipment.
Curb Roof:	A roof with an upper and lower set of rafters on each side, the under-set being less inclined to the horizon than the upper; a mansard roof.
Curing:	In concrete application, the process in which mortar and concrete harden. The length of time is dependent upon the type of cement, mix proportion, required strength, size and shape of the concrete section, weather and future exposure conditions. The period may be 3 weeks or longer for lean concrete mixtures used in structures such as dams or it may be only a few days for richer mixes. Favorable curing temperatures range from 50 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Design strength is achieved in 28 days.
Curing (Paint):	The process of paint bonding to a surface. Curing and drying are not the same.
Curing Agent:	One part of a multi-part sealant which, when added to the base, will cause the base to change its physical state by chemical reaction between the two parts.
Curtain Drain:	A ditch sometimes filled with gravel and a drain tile which diverts storm and drain water away from a structure.
Curtain Wall:	A thin wall, supported by the structural steel or concrete frame of the building independent of the wall below. Also a metal (most often aluminum) framing system on the face of a building containing vision glass panels and spandrel panels made of glass, aluminum, or other material.
Cut Off:	A piece of roofing membrane consisting of one or more narrow plies of felt usually mopped in hot to seal the edge of insulation at the end of a day's work.
Cut-In Brace:	Nominal 2-inch-thick members, usually 2x4s, cut in between each stud diagonally.
Cutback:	In roofing, basic asphalt or tar which has been "cut back" with solvents and oils so that the material become fluid.
Cutoff Valves:	Valves used to shut water off, generally located under sinks or behind bathtub and shower access panels. They cut off hot and/or cold water at the source without cutting all water off throughout the house.
Dado:	A rectangular groove across the width of a board or plank. In interior decoration, a special type of wall treatment.
Damper:	An air valve that regulates the flow of air inside the flue of a furnace or fireplace.
Dampproofing:	A process used on concrete, masonry or stone surfaces to repel water, the main purpose of which is to prevent the coated surface from absorbing rain water while still permitting moisture vapor to escape from the structure. (Moisture vapor readily penetrates coatings of this type.) "Dampproofing" generally applies to surfaces above grade; "waterproofing" generally applies to surfaces below grade. Darby: A flat tool used to smooth concrete flatwork immediately after screeding. See Bullfloating.
Dead Load:	The constant, design-weight (of the roof) and any permanent fixtures attached above or below.

Decay:	Disintegration of wood or other substance through the action of fungi.
Deck:	An elevated platform. "Deck" is also commonly used to refer to the above-ground floors in multi-level parking garage.
Deck Paint:	An enamel with a high degree of resistance to mechanical wear designed for use on such surfaces as porch floors.
Deflect:	To bend or deform under weight.
Deflection:	The amount of bending movement of any part of a structural member perpendicular to the axis of the member under an applied load.
Density:	The mass of substance in a unit volume. When expressed in the metric system, it is numerically equal to the specific gravity of the same substance.
Describe:	Report in writing on a system or component by its type or other observed characteristics to distinguish it from other components used for the same purpose.
Design Pressure:	Specified pressure a product is designed to withstand.
Designer:	One who designs houses, interiors, landscaping or other objects. When used in the context of residential construction it usually suggests that a designer is not a licensed architect. Most jurisdictions don't require an architectural license for most single family construction.
Dew Point:	Temperature at which vapor condenses from the atmosphere and forms water.
Dimension Lumber:	Yard lumber from 2 inches to, but not including, 5 inches thick and 2 or more inches wide. Includes joists, rafters, studs, plank, and small timbers.
Direct Gain System:	Passive solar heating system in which sunlight penetrates and warms the house interior directly.
Direct Nailing:	To nail perpendicular to the initial surface or to the junction of the pieces joined. Also termed Face Nailing.
Dismantle:	To open, take apart or remove any component, device or piece that would not typically be opened, taken apart or removed by an ordinary occupant.
Disposer:	A device that grinds food sufficiently to enter drains for disposal without clogging them.
Distortion:	Alteration of viewed images caused by variations in glass flatness or in gaseous portions within the glass. An inherent characteristic of heat-treated glass.
Diverter:	Valves which have a single inlet and direct water to one of two outlets. Diverters are used with handshowers, shower risers, tub & shower combinations, and kitchen faucet sprayers.
Diverter Valve:	A device that changes the direction of water flow from one faucet to another.
Dolly Varden Siding:	Beveled wood siding which is rabbeted on the bottom edge.
Doorjamb (Interior):	The surrounding case into which and out of which a door closes and opens. It consists of two upright pieces, called side jambs, and a horizontal head jamb.

Dormer:	A converted attic with windows projecting through a sloping roof.
Double Coverage:	Application of asphalt roofing so that the lapped portion is at least 2 inches wider than the exposed portion, resulting in two layers of roofing material over the deck.
Double Hung Window:	A window with sashes that slide vertically and allow opening from the top and bottom.
Double Plate:	When two layers of 2x4s are placed on top of studs in framing a wall.
Double Strength:	In float glass, approximately 1/8" (3 mm.) thick.
Double Tree:	Refers usually to a precast roof deck panel poured with two fins in its underside to impart flexural rigidity.
Double-Glazing:	In general, any use of two lights of glass, separated by an air space within an opening to improve insulation against heat transfer and/or sound transmission. In insulating glass units, the air between the glass sheets is thoroughly dried and the space is sealed, eliminating possible condensation and providing superior insulating properties.
Downspout:	The pipe that carries water down from the gutter or scupper. Also called a leader.
Draw:	The amount of progress billings on a contract that is currently available to a contractor under a contract with a fixed payment schedule.
Drawing Detail:	A top view drawing of a building or roof showing the roof perimeter and indicating the projections and roof mounted equipment, drawn to scale.
Drawing Outline:	A top view drawing of a building or roof showing only the perimeter drawn to scale.
Dressed and Matched (Tongued & Grooved):	Boards or planks machined in such a manner that there is a groove on one edge and a corresponding tongue on the other.
Dressed Size Lumber:	The dimension of lumber after shrinking from green dimension and after machining to size or pattern.
Drip Cap:	A molding placed on the exterior top side of a door or window frame to cause water to drip beyond the outside of the frame.
Drip Edge:	A device designed to prevent water from running back or under an overhang.
Drop Siding:	Usually ¾ inch thick and 6 and 8 inches wide with tongued-and-grooved or shiplap edges. Often used as siding without sheathing in secondary buildings.
Dry Glazing:	Also called compression glazing, a term used to describe various means of sealing monolithic and insulating glass in the supporting framing system with synthetic rubber and other elastomeric gasket materials.
Dry Seal:	Accomplishment of weather seal between glass and sash by use of strips or gaskets of Neoprene, EPDM, silicone or other flexible material. A dry seal may not be completely watertight.
Dry Sheet:	A ply mechanically attached to wood or gypsum decks to prevent asphalt or pitch from penetrating the deck and leaking into the building below.

Drywall:	A gypsum board material used for walls or ceilings.
Drywall Construction:	A type of construction in which the interior wall finish is applied in a dry condition, generally in the form of sheet materials or wood paneling as contrasted to plaster.
Drywall Hammer:	A special hammer used for nailing up gypsum board. Also known as an ax or hatchet. Edges should be smooth and the corners rounded off. The head has a convex round & checkered head.
Drywall Nail:	Nails used for hanging regular drywall that is to be taped and finished later must have adequate holding power and a head design that does not cut the face paper. They must also be of the proper depth to provide exactly 1 inch penetration into the framing member. Nails commonly used are chemically-etched and are designed with a cupped head.
Duct:	A cylindrical or rectangular "tube" used to move air either from exhaust or intake, and for distributing warm air from the heating plant to rooms, or air from a conditioning device or as cold air returns. The installation is referred to as "duct work."
Ductwork:	A system of distribution channels used to transmit heated or cooled air from a central system (HVAC) throughout a home.
Due-On-Sale:	A clause in a mortgage contract requiring the borrower to pay the entire outstanding balance upon sale or transfer of the property.
Durometer:	A gauge to measure the hardness of an elastomeric material.
Earthquake Strap:	A metal strap used to secure gas hot water heaters to the framing or foundation of a house. It is intended to reduce the chances of having the water heater fall over in an earthquake and causing a gas leak.
Easement:	A formal contract which allows a party to use another party's property for a specific purpose, e.g. a sewer easement might allow one party to run a sewer line through a neighbor's property.
Eave:	The part of the roof which extends beyond the side wall.
Eaves Flashing:	Additional layer of roofing material applied at the eaves to help prevent damage from water backup.
Edge Clearance:	Nominal spacing between the edge of the glass product and the bottom of the glazing pocket (channel).
Edge Grain (Vertical):	Edge-grain lumber has been sawed parallel to the pith of the log and approximately at right angles to the growth rings; i.e., the rings form an angle of 45° or more with the surface of the piece.
Edge Metal:	A term relating to brake or extruded metal around the perimeter of a roof.
Edging Strips:	Boards nailed along eaves and rakes to provide secure edges for reroofing with asphalt shingle after cutting back existing wood shingles.
EER:	Energy Efficiency Ratio is figured by dividing BTU hours by watts.

Egress:	A means of exiting the home. An egress window is required in every bedroom and basement. Normally a 4x4 window is the minimum size required.
EIFS:	Exterior Insulating and Finish System; exterior wall cladding system consisting primarily of polystyrene foam board with a textured acrylic finish that resembles plaster or stucco.
Elbow:	An angled fitting that alters the direction of the water line.
Electric Lateral:	The trench or area in the yard where the electric service line (from a transformer or pedestal) is located, or the work of installing the electric service to a home.
Electric Resistance Coils:	Metal wires that heat up when electric current passes through them and are used in
Elevation:	A side of a building.
Elevation Sheet:	The page on the blue prints that depicts the house or room as if a vertical plane were passed through the structure.
Emissivity:	The measure of a surface's ability to emit long-wave infrared radiation.
EMT (Electrical Metallic Tubing):	Electrical pipe, also called thin-wall conduit, which may be used for both concealed and exposed areas. It is the most common type of raceway used in single family and low rise residential and commercial buildings.
Emulsion:	In roofing, a coating consisting of asphalt and fillers suspended in water.
End Dams:	Internal flashing (dam) that prevents water from moving laterally within a curtain wall or window wall system.
End Lap:	The amount or location of overlap at the end of a roll of roofing felts in the application.
Energy Efficiency Ratio:	An air conditioning efficiency rating system which indicates the number of BTU's delivered per watt of power consumed.
Escutcheon:	A trim piece or decorative flange that fits beneath the faucet handle to conceal the faucet stem and the hole in the fixture or wall.
Evaluate:	To assess the systems, structures or components of a dwelling.
Examine:	To visually look. See Inspect.
Excavate:	To dig the basement and/or all areas that will need footings/foundations below ground.
Exhaust Fan:	Extracts air or excess heat from the interior of a home.
Expansion Coefficient:	The amount that a specific material will vary in any one dimension with a change of temperature.
Expansion Joint:	A device used to permit a structure to expand or contract without breakage. In residential construction, a bituminous fiber strip used to separate blocks or units of concrete to prevent cracking due to expansion as a result of temperature changes. Also used on concrete slabs.
Expansive Soils:	Earth that swells and contracts depending on the amount of water present.

Exposed Aggregate: A method of finishing concrete which washes the cement/sand mixture of the top layer of the aggregate - usually gravel. Often used in driveways, patios and other exterior surfaces.

Exposed Nail Method: Application of roll roofing in which all nails are driven into the cemented, overlapping course of roofing. Nails are exposed to the weather.

Exposure: The portion of the roofing exposed to the weather after installation.

Exterior Glazed: Glazing infills set from the exterior of the building.

Exterior Stop: The molding or bead that holds the light or panel in place when it is on the exterior side of the light or panel.

Extrusion: An item formed by forcing a base metal (frequently aluminum) or plastic, at a malleable temperature, through a die to achieve a desired shape.

Eyebrow: A flat, normally concrete, projection which protrudes horizontally from a building wall; Eyebrows are generally located above windows.

Facade: The front of a building. Frequently, in architectural terms an artificial or decorative effort.

Face Brick: Brick made especially for exterior use with special consideration of color, texture and size, and used as a facing on a building.

Face Glazing: A system having a triangular bead of compound applied with a putty knife, after bedding, setting, and clipping the glazing infill in place on a rabbeted sash.

Faced Concrete: To finish the front and all vertical sides of a concrete porch, step(s), or patio. Normally the "face" is broom finished.

Facing Brick: The brick used and exposed on the outside of a wall. Usually these have a finished texture.

Fall/Flow: The proper slope or pitch of a pipe for adequate drainage.

Fascia: A flat, horizontal board enclosing the overhang under the eave.

Fasteners: A general term covering a wide variety of screws and nails, which may be used for mechanically securing various components of a building.

Faucet: A device for regulating the flow of a liquid from a reservoir such as a pipe or drum.

Feathering Strips: Tapered wood filler strips placed along the butt edges of old wood shingles to create a level surface when re-roofing over existing wood shingle roofs. Also called "horsefeathers."

Felt: A very general term used to describe composition of roofing ply sheets, consisting of a mat of organic or inorganic fibers either unsaturated, impregnated with asphalt or coal tar pitch, or impregnated and coated with asphalt.

Fenestration: Any glass panel, window, door, curtain wall or skylight unit on the exterior of a building.

Ferrous: Refers to objects made of or partially made of iron, such as ferrous pipe.

Ferrule: Metal tubes used to keep roof gutters "open." Long nails (ferrule spikes) are driven through these tubes and hold the gutters in place along the fascia of the home.

FHA Strap:	Metal straps that are used to repair a bearing wall "cut-out," and to "tie together" wall corners, splices, and bearing headers. Also, they are used to hang stairs and landings to bearing headers.
Fibered Aluminum Roof Coating:	High-performance metallic reflective barrier for prepared roofing, metal surfaces and exterior masonry. Reflects sun's harmful rays, reduces energy costs in summer and winter while prolonging surface life.
Fibered Roof and Foundation Coating:	Combined application for this special mediumviscosity-grade fibered material. Use as a roof or foundation coating.
Fibered Roof Coating:	Optimal protection for low-sloped roofs. This thick, high-quality coating seals fine cracks and openings. Renews and rejuvenates old composition roofing and prolongs roof life. Also performs well on metal or concrete surfaces.
Fiberglass Mat:	An asphalt roofing base material manufactured from glass fibers.
Field Measure:	To take measurements (cabinets, countertops, stairs, shower doors, etc.) in the home itself instead of using the blueprints.
Fillet Bead:	Caulking or sealant placed in such a manner that it forms an angle between the materials being caulked.
Finger Joint:	A manufacturing process of interlocking two shorter pieces of wood end to end to create a longer piece of dimensional lumber or molding. Often used in jambs and casings and normally painted (instead of stained).
Finish:	In hardware, metal fastenings on cabinets which are usually exposed such as hinges and locks.
Finish Carpentry:	The hanging of all interior doors, installation of door molding, base molding, chair rail, built in shelves, etc.
Finish Coat:	The last coat applied in plastering intended as a base for further decorating or as a final decorative surface. Finish coat usually consists of calcified gypsum, lime and sometimes an aggregate. Some may require the addition of lime or sand on the job. The three basic methods of applying it are trowel, flat and spray.
Finish Grade:	Any surface which has been cut to or built to the elevation indicated for that point. Surface elevation of lawn, driveway or other improved surfaces after completion of grading operations.
Fire Block:	Short horizontal members sometimes nailed between studs, usually about halfway up a wall.
Fire Brick:	Brick made of refractory ceramic material which will resist high temperatures. Used in fireplaces and boilers.
Fire Rated:	Descriptive of materials that have been tested for use in fire walls.
Fire Retardant Chemical:	A chemical or preparation of chemicals used to reduce flammability or to retard spread of flame.

Fire Wall:	Wall built for the purpose of restricting or preventing the spread of fire in a building. Such walls of solid masonry or concrete generally sub-divide a building from the foundations to two or more feet above the plane of the roof.
Fire-Resistive:	In the absence of a specific ruling by the authority having jurisdiction, applies to materials for construction not combustible in the temperatures of ordinary fires and that will withstand such fires without serious impairment of their usefulness for at least 1 hour.
Fitting:	A general term that usually refers to faucets, shower valves, tub fillers, or various piping parts such as tees or elbows.
Fixture:	The devices that provide a supply of water and/or its disposal, e.g. sinks, tubs, toilets.
Flagstone:	Flat stones, from 1 to 4 inches thick, used for rustic walks, steps, floors, and the like.
Flake:	A scale-like particle. To lose bond from a surface in small thin pieces.
Flakeboard:	A manufactured wood panel made out of 1"- 2" wood chips and glue. Often used as a substitute for plywood in the exterior wall and roof sheathing. Also called OSB or Wafer Board.
Flapper Valve:	A valve that replaces a tank stopper in a toilet. Creates a seal between the tank and the bowl.
Flash Point:	The critical temperature at which a material will ignite.
Flashing:	Material used around any angle in a roof or wall to prevent leakage.
Flat Glass:	A general term that describes float glass, sheet glass, plate glass, and rolled glass.
Flat Grain:	Flat grain lumber has been sawed parallel to the pith of the log and approximately tangent to the growth rings, i.e., the rings form an angle of less than 45° with the surface of the piece.
Flat Mold:	Thin wood strips installed over the butt seam of cabinet skins.
Flat Seam:	Seam at the junction of sheet metal roof components that has been bent at the plane of roof.
Flatwork:	Common word for concrete floors, driveways, basements, and sidewalks.
Flex Hose:	A flexible pipe or tube usually made of braided stainless steel. Commonly used with widespread or Roman tub faucets to provide variable centers.
Flexible Metal Conduit:	Conduit similar to armored cable in appearance but does not have the pre-inserted conductors.
Float Glass:	Glass formed on a bath of molten tin. The surface in contact with the tin is known as the tin surface or tin side. The top surface is known as the atmosphere surface or air side.
Floating:	The next-to-last stage in concrete work, when it is smoothed and water is brought to the surface by using a hand float or bull float.
Floating Wall:	A non-bearing wall built on a concrete floor. It is constructed so that the bottom two horizontal plates can compress or pull apart if the concrete floor moves up or down. Normally built on basements and garage slabs.

Floor Plan:	Basic layout of building or addition, which includes placement of walls, windows and doors as well as dimensions.
Flow Rate:	The rate by which water is discharged from an outlet. For example, the standard flow rate of a showerhead is 2.5 gallons per minute.
Flue:	A pipe used to exhaust smoke, gas or air.
Flue Collar:	Round metal ring which fits around the heat flue pipe after the pipe passes out of the roof.
Flue Damper:	An automatic door located in the flue that closes it off when the burner turns off; its purpose is to reduce heat loss up the flue from the still-warm furnace or boiler.
Flue Lining:	Fire clay or terracotta pipe, round or square, usually made in all ordinary flue sizes and in 2-foot lengths, used for the inner lining of chimneys with the brick or masonry work around the outside. Flue lining in chimneys runs from about a foot below the flue connection to the top of the chimney.
Fluorescent Lighting:	A fluorescent lamp is a gas-filled glass tube with a phosphor coating on the inside, normally with two pins that extend from each end. Gas inside the tube is ionized by electricity which causes the phosphor coating to glow.
Flush Glazing:	The setting of a light of glass or panel into a four-sided sash or frame opening containing a recessed "U" shaped channel without removable stops on three sides of the sash or frame and one channel with a removable stop along the fourth side.
Flush Valve:	The valve separating the water in the tank from the bowl.
Flux:	A material applied to the surface of copper pipes and fittings to assist in the cleaning and bonding process.
Fly Rafters:	End rafters of the gable overhang supported by roof sheathing and lookouts.
Folded Seam:	In sheet metal work, a joint between sheets of metal wherein the edges of the sheets are crimped together and folded flat.
Footing:	The underground support for a foundation or support post.
Footings:	Wide pours of cement reinforced with re-bar (reinforcing bar) that support foundation walls, pillars, or posts. Footings are part of the foundation and are often poured before the foundation walls.
Forced Air Heating:	A common form of heating with natural gas, propane, oil or electricity as a fuel. Air is heated in the furnace and distributed through a set of metal plastic ducts to various areas of the house.
Form:	Temporary structure erected to contain concrete during placing and initial hardening.
Foundation:	The supporting portion of a structure below the first floor construction, or below grade, including the footings.
Foundation Coating:	High-quality below-grade moisture protection. Used for belowgrade exterior concrete and masonry wall damp-proofing to seal out moisture and prevent corrosion.

Frame Inspection:	An inspection of the home's structural integrity and its compliance to local municipal codes.
Framer:	The carpenter contractor that installs the lumber and erects the frame, flooring system, interior walls, backing, trusses, rafters, decking, installs all beams, stairs, soffits and all work related to the wood structure of the home. The framer builds the home according to the blueprints and must comply with local building codes and regulations.
Framing:	The structural wood and/or metal elements of most homes. The floor and ceiling framing is called the joist work. Wall framing is usually made out of 2x4 or 2x6 studs. See Rafters, Posts, and Beams.
Free-Tab Shingles:	Shingles that do not contain factory-applied strips or spots of self sealing adhesive.
Frieze:	In house construction, a horizontal member connecting the top of the siding with the soffit of the cornice.
Frostline:	The depth of frost penetration in soil. This depth varies in different parts of the country. Footings should be placed below this depth to prevent movement.
Fully Tempered Glass:	Flat or bent glass that has been heat-treated to a high surface and/or edge compression to meet the requirements of ASTM C 1048 kind FT. Fully tempered glass, if broken, will fracture into many small pieces (dice) which are more or less cubical. Fully tempered glass is approximately four times stronger than annealed glass of the same thickness when exposed to uniform static pressure loads.
Fully-Adhered:	A completely attached (adhered) roof membrane.
Furnace:	A heating system that uses the principle of thermal convection. When air is heated, it rises and as the air cools it settles. Ducts are installed to carry the hot air from the top of the furnace to the rooms. Other ducts, called cold air returns, return the cooler air back to the furnace.
Furring:	Strips of wood or metal applied to a wall or other surface to even it and normally to serve as a fastening base for finish material.
Gable:	The end of a building as distinguished from the front or rear side. The triangular end of an exterior wall from the level of the eaves to the ridge of a double-sloped roof. In house construction, the portion of the roof above the eave line of a double-sloped roof.
Gable End:	An end wall having a gable.
Gable Roof:	A type of roof with sloping planes of the same pitch on each side of the ridge. Has a gable at each end.
Galvanize:	To coat a metal with zinc by dipping it in molten zinc after cleaning.
Gambrel Roof:	A type of roof which has its slope broken by an obtuse angle, so that the lower slope is steeper than the upper slope. A double sloped roof having two pitches.
Gang Nail Plate:	A steel plate attached to both sides at each joint of a truss. Sometimes called a Fishplate or Gusset.
Gas Lateral:	The trench or area in the yard where the gas line service is located, or the work of installing the gas service to a home.