

Management Overview

Basic Construction Management: The Superintendent's Job by Jerry Householder and Leon Rogers (Home Builder Press, National Association of Home Builders, 15th and M Streets, N.W. Washington, DC 20005; 202/822-0200; 63 pages; 8 1/2x11 paperback; \$16, NAHB members; \$21, nonmembers).



If I were about to hire a superintendent for my crew, or if I were being called up from the ranks to fill such a position, I'd latch on to a copy of *Basic Construction Management: The Superintendent's Job* from the NAHB Home Builder Press.

This book won't teach a candidate all the skills he will need to join the management team of a residential construction company, but then no book could. While *The Superintendent's Job* wasn't intended to supply everything you'll need to know, it does provide a good, broad overview of the superintendent's responsibilities. It outlines the procedures needed to do a quality job on time and on budget.

Among the construction management skills and systems covered are keeping daily logs, maintaining quality control, and budgeting.

One section explores the issues of leadership styles. The book outlines when you can be most effective as an "autocratic" manager, who imposes his will, or a democratic manager, who listens and incorporates the best suggestions. The book suggests ways to start a project on the right foot and predict problems. It gives tips on maintaining good relations with inspectors and subs, and explains how managing your subs differs from managing employees. The authors give attention to customer relations, safety and legal issues, and a number of other important topics.

Contract Basics

The Builder's Guide to Contract Liability by the Legal Department of National Association of Homebuilders (Home Builder Press, National Association of Home Builders, 15th and M Streets, N.W. Washington, DC 20005; 202/822-0200; 1989; 51 pages; 8 1/2x11 paperback; \$10, NAHB members, \$12.50, nonmembers).

See if one of these descriptions fits you: You're new to the building game; you have been burned by a job in the past; or you simply want to do business in a manner that will help you control your liability with well-written contracts.

If you fit one or all of these descriptions, take a look at *The Builder's Guide to Contract Liability*. This slim volume provides sample contract clauses and commentary that will help you understand why certain contract language is desirable before anyone signs on the dotted line.

This book covers a long list of issues in its 51 pages. It looks at contract documents, payment schedules, liquidated damages and retainage, all

the while giving helpful advice about the issue at hand. For instance, for retainage, be sure it's held in an interest-bearing account. For liquidated damages, you need to inform your subs of certain provisions.

The book includes a look at change orders and arbitration. You may find it helpful to read why you might prefer the National Academy of Conciliators to the American Arbitration Association. There's information on punch lists, environmental liability (toxic wastes, indoor air pollution, and radon), warranties, and contracts with subcontractors. Though the book is informative, the authors point out repeatedly that this text is not a substitute for a lawyer. In any event, it's good reading.

— Paul Hanke

Free & Cheap

Radon Begone: Available free from the EPA, *Radon-Resistant Residential New Construction* provides a broad range of techniques for the design and application of radon-resistant construction in new houses. Topics covered include identification of radon-prone sites, radon entry and barriers, avoiding depressurization and between-floor pressure differences, designing for post-construction active or passive sub-slab ventilation, current practice in radon-resistant construction, and associated costs. Diagrams and a glossary are included. To receive a copy of this 67-page booklet, write Radon Division, (ANR-464), Office of Radiation Programs, U.S. EPA, Washington, DC 20460.

Alternatives for Affordability: *Affordable Housing: A Resource Guide to Alternative and Factory-Built Homes, New Technologies, and the Owner-Builder Option*, a 186-page book from McFarland, contains over 350 very descriptive entries for post-1980 books, reports, and articles on building options that can make affordable housing a reality. The first section has chapters listing materials on factory-built, log, mobile, and owner-built homes; as well as mortgages. Each chapter begins with an introductory essay. The second section of the book give names and addresses for organizations, owner-builder schools, manufacturers and publishers or books and periodicals. To order, send \$27 to McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640; 919/246-4460.

Insulation's Other Benefits: *Fire Resistance and Sound Control: A Guide for Insulated Construction*, a free 11-page brochure from CertainTeed, helps builders and architects select wall, floor, and ceiling systems to reduce sound transmission and the passage of fire. The brochure explains terminology, details existing codes, and states measurement procedures. Drawings of thirteen building insulation assemblies covering various standard fire and sound ratings for new and existing construction are also included. Contact CertainTeed Corporation, P.O. Box 860, Valley Forge, PA 19482; 800/523-7844.

— Lauren Chapman