CARDINAL POINT
HOME INSPECTIONS

Cardinal Point's Home Inspection Glossary of Terms

A

- 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: The 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: (Acrylonitrile butadiene styrene) 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.
- Accessible: Can be approached or entered by the inspector safely, without difficulty, fear or danger.
- 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.
- Actual Dimension (Lumber): The exact measurement of lumber after it has been cut, dried and milled.

- **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 screwed onto 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, that 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 of the throwaway or disposable type.**
- **Air Infiltration: The amount of air leaking in and out of a building through cracks in walls, windows and doors.**
- **Air Space: The 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.**
- **Algae: Microorganisms that may grow to colonies in damp environments, including certain rooftops. They can discolor shingles. Often described as "fungus."**
- **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.**
- **Allowance(s): A sum of money set aside in the construction contract for items which have not been selected and specified in the construction contract. Best kept to a minimum number and used for items whose choice will not impact earlier stages of the construction. For example, selection of tile because flooring may require an alternative framing or underlayment material. (Also, money that your parents give you as a child.)**
- **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.**
- **Annual Percentage Rate (APR): 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.**
- **Aperature: 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.**
- **Asbestos: A common form of magnesium silicate which was used in various construction products due to its stability and resistance to fire. Asbestos exposure (caused by inhaling loose asbestos fibers) is associated with various forms of lung disease. The name given to certain inorganic minerals when they occur in fibrous form. Though fire-resistant, its extremely fine fibers are easily inhaled, and exposure to them over a period of years has been linked to cancers of the lung or lung-cavity lining and to asbestosis a severe lung impairment. A naturally occurring mineral fiber sometimes found in older homes. It is hazardous to your health when a**

possibility exists of exposure to inhalable fibers.

Homeowners should be alert for friable (readily crumbled, brittle) asbestos and always seek professional advice in dealing with it.

- 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.
- Asphalt Plastic Cement: An asphalt-based cement used to bond roofing materials.
- Assessment: A tax levied on a property, or a value placed on the worth of a property.
- Associate Member: An indentured servant. Beginning level of inspection association membership. Slave. See Candidate.
- 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.

B

- 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 over hanging 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 (or Lap Siding): Wedge-shaped boards used as horizontal siding in a lapped pattern. This siding varies in butt thickness from ½ to ¾ 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.**
- **Bid Bond: A bond issued by a surety on behalf of a contractor that provides assurance to the recipient of the contractor's bid that, if the bid is accepted, the contractor will execute a contract and provide a performance bond. Under the bond, the surety is obligated to pay the recipient of the bid the difference between the contractor's bid and the bid of the next lowest responsible bidder if the bid is accepted and the contractor fails to execute a contract or to provide a performance bond.**
- **Bid Documents: Drawings, details, and specifications for a particular project.**
- **Bid Security: Funds or a bid bond submitted with a bid as a guarantee to the recipient of the bid that the contractor, if awarded the contract, will execute the contract in accordance with the bidding requirements of the contract documents.**
- **Bid Shopping: A practice by which contractors, both before and after their bids are submitted, attempt to obtain prices from potential subcontractors and material suppliers that are lower than the contractors' original estimates on which their bids are based, or after a contract is awarded, seek to induce subcontractors to reduce the subcontract price included in the bid.**
- **Bidding Requirements: The procedures and conditions for the submission of bids. The requirements are included on documents, such as the notice to bidders, advertisements for bids, instructions to bidders, invitations to bid, and sample bid forms.**
- **Bifold 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 term by a buyer and seller.**
- **Bipass 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 ¾ 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.**
- **Blocked (Door Blocking): Wood shims used between the door frame and the vertical structural wall framing members.**
- **Blocked (Rafters): Short 2x4s used to keep rafters from twisting, and installed at the ends and at mid-span.**
- **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 Stain: A bluish or grayish discoloration of the sapwood caused the growth of certain mold like fungi on the surface and in the interior of a piece, made possible by the same conditions that favor the growth of other fungi.**
- **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.**
- **Bodied Linseed Oil: Linseed oil that has been thickened in viscosity by suitable processing with heat or chemicals. Bodied oils are obtainable in a great range in viscosity from a little greater than that of raw oil to just short of a jellied condition.**
- **Boiled Linseed Oil: Linseed oil in which enough lead, manganese or cobalt salts have been incorporated to make the oil harden more rapidly when spread in thin coatings.**
- **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 (Electrical): A thin strip of metal inside armored or BX cable. This strip is meant to back up the primary ground.**
- **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 stifled 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 (Electrical): Wiring that runs from a service panel or sub-panel to outlets. Branch circuits are protected by fuses or breakers at the panel.**
- **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 (veneer) 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 sheeting 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.**
- **Builder's Risk Insurance: Insurance coverage on a construction project during construction, including extended coverage that may be added for the contract for the customer's protections.**
- **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 placing the member in position, such as the buttering of a removable stop before fastening the stop in place.**

- **Butyl: Type of non-curing and non-skinning sealant made from butylene. Usually used for internal applications.**
- **Buy Down: A subsidy (usually paid by a builder or developer) to reduce monthly payments on a mortgage.**
- **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.**

C

- **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.**
- **Candidate: An indentured servant. Beginning level of inspection association membership. Slave. See Associate Member.**
- **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.**
- **Capital: The principal part of a loan, i.e. the original amount borrowed.**
- **Capital and Interest: A repayment loan and the most conventional form of home loan. The borrower pays an amount each month to cover the amount borrowed (capital or principal) plus the interest charged on capital.**
- **Capped Rate: The mortgage interest rate will not exceed a specified value during a certain period of time, but it will fluctuate up and down below that level.**
- **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 sidehinged 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 (Plumbing): 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.**
- **CCA (Chromated Copper Arsenate): A pesticide that is forced into wood under high pressure to protect it from termites, other wood boring insects, and decay caused by fungus.**
- **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.**

- **Cells (Masonry): The hollow spaces in concrete blocks.**
- **Cellulose Insulation: Ground-up newspaper that is treated with a fire retardant.**
- **Celotex ™: Black fibrous board that is used as exterior sheething.**
- **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.**
- **Certificate of Occupancy: A document stating that a building is approved for occupancy. The Building Authority issues the Certificate of Occupancy.**
- **Certified: Having a formal document testifying to qualification or completion of requirements.**
- **CFM (Cubic Feet per Minute): Measure of volume of air. When testing systems, find the CFM by multiplying the face velocity (amount of air passing through the face of an outlet or return) times the free area (the total area of the openings in the outlet or inlet through which air can pass) in square feet.**
- **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.**
- **Change Order: A written document which modifies the plans and specifications and/or the price of the Construction Contract.**
- **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.**

- **Chapter: A local group of members of a larger association, as in a local NACHI Chapter. A local branch.**
- **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.**
- **Chink: To install fiberglass insulation around all exterior door and window frames, wall corners, and small gaps in the exterior wall.**
- **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.**
- **CO: An abbreviation for "Certificate of Occupancy."**
- **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.**
- **Code of Ethics: Ethical standards of conduct for home inspectors.**
- **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 Board or Wonderboard (TM): 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.
- Conditions, Convenants, and Restrictions (CC and Rs): 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 Contract: A legal document which specifies the details of a construction project. A good construction contract will include: 1.The contractors registration number. 2.A statement of work quality such as 'Standard Practices of the Trades' or 'according to Manufacturers Specifications.' 3.A set of blue prints or plans. 4.A set of specifications. 5.Any allowances. 6.A construction timetable including starting and completion dates. 7.A fixed price for the work, or a time and materials formula. 8.A payment schedule. 9.A written warrantee. 10.A clause which outlines how any disputes will be resolved.**
- **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 generals 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. There are various types of contractors: General Contractor – responsible for the execution, supervision and overall coordination of a project and may also perform some of the individual construction tasks. Most general contractors are not licensed to perform all specialty trades and must hire specialty contractors for such tasks, e.g. electrical, plumbing. Remodeling Contractor – a general contractor who specializes in remodeling work. Specialty Contractor – licensed to perform a specialty task e.g. electrical, side sewer, asbestos abatement. Sub Contractor – a general or specialty contractor who works for another general contractor.

- **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 cave line, usually consisting of a facie 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.**
- **Covenants: Rules usually developed by a builder or developer regarding the physical appearance of buildings in a particular geographic area. Typical covenants address building height, appropriate fencing and landscaping, and the type of exterior material (stucco, brick, stone, siding, etc) that may be used.**
- **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.**
- **CPVC (Chlorinated Polyvinyl Chloride): Rigid plastic pipe used in water supply systems where code permits.**
- **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.**
- **Crazing: A series of hairline cracks in the surface of weathered materials, having a web- like appearance. Also, hairline cracks in pre-finished metals caused by bending or forming (see Brake Metal).**
- **Credit Rating: A report ordered by a lender from a credit agency to determine a borrower's credit habits.**
- **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.

D

- 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.
- De-Humidistat: A control mechanism used to operate a mechanical ventilation system based upon the relative humidity in the home.
- 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.**
- **Decorative: Ornamental; not required for the operation of essential systems and components of a home.**
- **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 it 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.**
- **Determine: To arrive at an opinion or conclusion pursuant to examination.**
- **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 homogeneous 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.**
- **Drier Paint: Usually oil-soluble soaps of such metals as lead manganese or cobalt which, in small proportions, hasten the oxidation and hardening (drying) of the drying oils in paints.**
- **Drip: (a) A member of a cornice or other horizontal exterior finish course that has a projection beyond the other parts for throwing off water. (b) A groove in the underside of a sill or drip cap to cause water to drop off on the outer edge instead of drawing back and running down the face of the building.**
- **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.**
- **Drippage: Bitumen material that drips through roof deck joints, or over the edge of a roof deck.**
- **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.**
- **Dropping a Stringer: In carpentry, "dropping" a stringer refers to cutting short on the bottom of a stairs to allow for thickness of the first tread.**
- **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 Rot: See Fungal Wood Rot.**
- **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.**
- **Dry-In: To make a building waterproof.**
- **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.**
- **Dumbwaiter: An elevator with a maximum footage of not more than 9 sq. ft. floor area; not more than 4″ headroom and a maximum capacity of 500 lbs. used for carrying materials only.**

- **Dura Board, Dura Rock: A panel made out of concrete and fiberglass usually used as a ceramic tile backing material. Commonly used on bathtub decks. Sometimes called Wonder Board.**
- **Durometer: A gauge to measure the hardness of an elastomeric material.**
- **DWV (Drainage, Waste & Vent): The pipes in a plumbing system that remove waste water.**

E

- **E&O Insurance: Errors and Omissions Insurance.**
- **Earnest Money: A sum paid to the seller to show that a potential purchaser is serious about buying.**
- **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 re- roofing with asphalt shingle after cutting back existing wood shingles.**
- **EER: Energy Efficiency Ratio is figured by dividing BTU hours by watts.**
- **Efflorescence: A white powder on the surface of walls due to evaporation of water. It forms on the surface of bricks.**
- **Egress: A means of exiting the home. An egress window is required in every bedroom and basement. Normally a 4×4 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.**
- **Elastomer: An elastic rubber-like substance, such as natural or synthetic rubber.**
- **Elastomeric: Of or pertaining to any of the numerous flexible membranes that contain rubber or plastic.**

- **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 baseboard heaters and electric water heaters.**
- **Electrical Entrance Package: The entry point of the electrical power including: (1) the 'strike' or location where the overhead electrical lines connect to the house. (2) The meter which measures how much power is used. (3) The 'panel,' 'circuit breaker box 'or 'fuse box' where the power can be shut off and overload devices such a fuses or circuit breakers and located.**
- **Electrical Rough: Work performed by the Electrical Contractor after the plumber and heating contractor are complete with their phase of work. Normally all electrical wires, and outlet, switch, and fixture boxes are installed (before insulation).**
- **Electrical Trim: Work performed by the Electrical Contractor when the house is nearing completion. The electrician installs all plugs, switches, light fixtures, smoke detectors, appliance "pig tails", bath ventilation fans, wires the furnace, and "makes up" the electric house panel. The electrician does all work necessary to get the home ready for and to pass the municipal electrical final inspection.**
- **Electrolytic Coupling: A fitting required to join copper to galvanized pipe and gasketed to prevent galvanic action. Connecting pipes of different materials may result in electrolysis.**
- **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.**
- **Ell: See Elbow.**
- **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.**

- **Engineering Service: Any professional service or creative work requiring engineering education, training, and experience and the application of special knowledge of the mathematical, physical and engineering sciences to such professional service or creative work as consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, design and supervision of construction for the purpose of assuring compliance with the specifications and design, in conjunction with structures, buildings, machines, equipment, works or processes.**
- **Enter: To go into an area to observe all visible components.**
- **EPDM (Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer): A single ply membrane consisting of synthetic rubber; usually 45 or 60 mils. Application can be ballasted, fully adhered or mechanically attached.**
- **Equity: The "valuation" that you own in your home, i.e. the property value less the mortgage loan outstanding.**
- **Escrow: The handling of funds or documents by a third party on behalf of the buyer and/or seller.**
- **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.**
- **Estimate: The anticipated cost of materials, labor, and associated cost for a proposed construction, repair, or remodeling project.**
- **Estimating: The process of calculating the cost of a project. This can be a formal and exact process or a quick and imprecise process.**
- **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 that is 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 Aggregate Finish: A method of finishing concrete which washes the cement/sand mixture off 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.**
- **Exposure I Grade Plywood: Type of plywood approved by the American Plywood Association for exterior use.**
- **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.**
- **Extras: Additional work requested of a contractor, not included in the original plan, which will be billed separately and will not alter the original contract amount, but increase the cost of building the home.**
- **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.**

F

- **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 rabetted 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.**

- **Factory Mutual (FM): Insurance agency that has established stringent guidelines for maximum construction integrity as it relates to fire and environmental hazards. Their specifications have become industry standards.**
- **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.**
- **Female IPS: Pipe connection where the threads are on the inside of the fitting. See FIP.**
- **Female Threads: See FIP.**
- **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 medium- viscosity-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.**
- **FindAnInspector.US: Foremost home inspector search engine.**
- **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.**
- **FIP (Female Iron Pipe): Standard threads that are on the inside of a pipe fitting.**
- **Fire Block: Short horizontal members sometimes nailed between studs, usually about halfway up a wall. See also 'Fire Stop.'**
- **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 Stop: A solid, tight closure of a concealed space, placed to prevent the spread of fire and smoke through such a space. In a frame wall, this will usually consist of 2x4s cross blocking between studs.**
- **Fire Wall: Any 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.**

- **Fireplace Chase Flashing Pan: A large sheet of metal that is installed around and perpendicular to the fireplace flue pipe. Its purpose is to confine and limit the spread of fire and smoke to a small area.**
- **Fish Tape (Fish Wire): Material used to advance wire through a conduit.**
- **Fishplate: A wood or plywood piece used to fasten the ends of two members together at a butt joint with nails or bolts. Sometimes used at the junction of opposite rafters near the ridge line.**
- **Fitting: A general term that usually refers to faucets, shower valves, tub fillers, or various piping parts such as tees or elbows.**
- **Fixed Price Contract: A contract with a set price for the work. See Time and Materials Contract.**
- **Fixture: In plumbing, the devices that provide a supply of water and/or its disposal, e.g. sinks, tubs, toilets.**
- **Flagstone (Flagging or Flags): 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. Sometimes a paint film "flakes."**
- **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.**
- **Flame Retention Burner: An oil burner designed to hold the flame near the nozzle surface. Generally the most efficient type for residential use.**
- **Flapper Valve (Plumbing): 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 Paint: An interior paint that contains a high proportion of pigment and dries to a flat or lusterless finish.**
- **Flat Seam: A seam at the junction of sheet metal roof components that has been bent at the plane of the roof.**
- **Flatwork: Common word for concrete floors, driveways, basements, and sidewalks.**

- **Fleet Averaging: By using a point system, builders can show compliance with energy building requirements by using average figures for all air conditioning units in the same sub division.**
- **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: The basic layout of building or addition, which includes placement of walls, windows and doors as well as dimensions.**
- **Floor Plate: See Floor Plan.**
- **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 (Pocket 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.**
- **Foot Print: See Floor Plan.**
- **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 below- grade 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 2×4 or 2×6 studs. See Rafters, Posts, and Beams.**
- **Free-Tab Shingles: Shingles that do not contain factory-applied strips or spots of self- sealing adhesive. See also self-sealing shingles.**
- **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.
- Fungal Wood Rot: A common wood destroying organism which develops when wood containing material is exposed to moisture and poor air circulation for a long (6 months +) period of time. Often and incorrectly referred to as dry rot.
- Fungi (Wood): Microscopic plants that live in damp wood and cause mold, stain, and decay.
- Fungicide: A chemical that is poisonous to fungi.
- 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.

G

- 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.
- Gaskets: Pre-formed shapes, such as strips, grommets, etc., of rubber or rubber-like composition, used to fill and seal a joint or opening either alone or in conjunction with a supplemental application of a sealant.
- Gate Valve: A valve that lets you completely stop, but not modulate, the flow within a pipe.
- Gauge: The thickness of sheet metal and wire, etc.

- **Gauge Board (Spot Board): Board used to carry grout needed to patch small jobs.**
- **General Contractor: A contractor responsible for all facets of construction of a building or renovation.**
- **General Contractor (Prime Contractor): A contractor responsible for all facets of construction of a building or renovation.**
- **GFI or GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters): Special devices capable of opening a circuit when even a small amount of current is flowing through the grounding system.**
- **GFRC (Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete): Material used in wall systems that resembles but generally does not perform as well as concrete. Usually a thin cementitious material laminated to plywood or other lightweight backing.**
- **Girder: A main beam upon which floor joists rest. Used to support concentrated loads at isolated points along its length, usually made of steel or wood.**
- **Girdle: A large principal beam made of steel, reinforced concrete, wood or combination of these, used to support other structural members at isolated points along its length.**
- **Glass: A hard, brittle substance, usually transparent, made by fusing silicates under high temperatures with soda, lime, etc.**
- **Glass-Base: Roll roofing product built on a fiberglass base sheet constructed with a heavyweight TAMKO fiberglass mat, coated with weathering-grade asphalt. Used as a base sheet in select TAMKO modified asphalt and fiberglass roofing systems and as an alternate for TAMKO Type 43 Coated Base Sheet in any TAMKO specification. Hot- asphalt applied or mechanically fastened.**
- **Glass-Seal: 3-tab self-sealing fiberglass shingles with a traditional square-tab design. A thick layer of weathering-grade asphalt gives them extra waterproofing protection. They are U.L. Class A fire rated and backed by a 20-year limited warranty. Algae-resistant granules optional.**
- **Glaze Coat: In roofing, a light uniform mopping of bitumen on exposed felts to protect them from the weather, pending completion of the job.**
- **Glazing: A generic term used to describe an infill material such as glass, panels, etc. Also, the process of installing an infill material into a prepared opening in windows, door panels, partitions, etc.**
- **Glazing Bead: In glazing, a strip surrounding the edge of the glass in a window or door which holds the glass in place.**
- **Glazing Channel: In glazing, a three-sided, U-shaped sash detail into which a glass product is installed and retained.**
- **Globe Valve: A valve that lets you adjust the flow of water to any rate between fully on and fully off. Also see Gate Valve.**

- **Gloss (Paint or Enamel): A paint or enamel that contains a relatively low proportion of pigment and dries to a sheen or luster.**
- **Gloss Enamel: A finishing material made of varnish and sufficient pigments to provide opacity and color, but little or no pigment of low opacity. Such an enamel forms a hard coating with maximum smoothness of surface and a high degree of gloss.**
- **Glued Laminated Beam (Glulam): A structural beam composed of wood laminations or lams. The lams are pressure bonded with adhesives to attain a typical thickness of 1 ½" . (It looks like 5 or more 2x4s are glued together).**
- **GPF (Gallons Per Flush): The unit of measurement by which flow rate of toilets are measured and regulated. Current U.S. regulations for toilets require a maximum of 1.6 GPF.**
- **GPM (Gallons Per Minute): The unit of measurement by which the flow rate of faucets and showerheads is measured and regulated.**
- **Grade Beam: A foundation wall that is poured level with or just below the grade of the earth. An example is the area where the 8′ or 16′ overhead garage door "block out" is located, or a lower (walk out basement) foundation wall is poured.**
- **Grade MW: Moderate Weather grade of brick for moderate resistance to freezing used, for example, in planters.**
- **Grade NW: No Weather brick intended for use as a back-up or interior masonry.**
- **Grade SW: Severe Weather grade of brick intended for use where high resistance to freezing is desired.**
- **Graduated Payment Mortgage (GPM): A fixed-rate, fixed-schedule loan. It starts with lower payments than a level payment loan; payments rise annually, with the entire increase being used to reduce the outstanding balance. The increase in payments may enable the borrower to pay off a 30-year loan in 15 to 20 years, or less.**
- **Grain: The direction, size, arrangement, appearance, or quality of the fibers in wood.**
- **Granules: The mineral particles of a graded size which are embedded in the asphalt coating of shingles and roofing.**
- **Gravel: Loose fragments of rock used for surfacing built-up roofs, in sizes varying from 1/8″ to 1¾."**
- **Grid: The completed assembly of main and cross tees in a suspended ceiling system before the ceiling panels are installed. Also the decorative slats (munton) installed between glass panels.**
- **Ground: Refers to electricity's habit of seeking the shortest route to earth. Neutral wires carry it there in all circuits. An additional grounding wire or the sheathing of the metal- clad cable or conduit protects against shock if the neutral leg is interrupted.**

- **Ground Iron: The plumbing drain and waste lines that are installed beneath the basement floor. Cast iron was once used, but black plastic pipe (ABS) is now widely used.**
- **Ground System: The connection of current-carrying neutral wire to the grounding terminal in the main switch which in turn is connected to a water pipe. The neutral wire is called the ground wire.**
- **Grounding Rod: Rod used to ground an electrical panel.**
- **Grounds: Guides used around openings and at the floorline to strike off plaster. They can consist of narrow strips of wood or of wide sub-jambs at interior doorways. They provide a level plaster line for installation of casing and other trim.**
- **Groundwater: Water from an aquifer or subsurface water source.**
- **Grout: A hydrous mortar whose consistency allows it to be placed or pumped into small joints or cavities, as between pieces of ceramic clay, slate, or tile. Also, various mortar mixes used in foundation work to fell voids in soils, usually injected through drilled holes.**
- **Grout or Grouting: A cement mortar mixture made of such consistency (by adding water) that it will flow into joints and cavities of masonry work to fill them solid.**
- **Gun Consistency: Sealant formulated in a degree of viscosity suitable for application through the nozzle of a caulking gun.**
- **Gunite: A construction material composed of cement, sand or crushed slag and water mixed together and forced through a cement gun by pneumatic pressure, used in the construction of swimming pools.**
- **Gusset: A flat wood, plywood, or similar type member used to provide a connection at intersection of wood members. Most commonly used at joints of wood trusses. They are fastened by nails, screws, bolts, or adhesives.**
- **Gutter: Metal or wood trough at the eaves of a roof to carry rain water from the roof to the downspout.**
- **Gutter Strap: Metal bands used to support the gutter.**
- **Guy Wire: A strong steel wire or cable strung from an anchor on the roof to any tall slender projection for the purpose of support.**
- **Gypsum Board: See Drywall.**
- **Gypsum Keene Cement: Material used to obtain a smooth finish coat of plaster, for use over gypsum plastic base coats only and in areas not subject to moisture. It is the hardest plaster.**
- **Gypsum Plaster: Gypsum formulated to be used with the addition of sand and water for base-coat plaster.**

H

- **H Clip: Small metal clips formed like an "H" that fits at the joints of two plywood (or wafer board) sheets to stiffen the joint. Normally used on the roof sheeting.**
- **Hardware: Metal accessories such as door knobs, towel bars, toilet paper holders, etc.**
- **Hatch: An opening in a deck, floor or roof. The usual purpose is to provide access from inside the building.**
- **Haunch: An extension, knee-like protrusion of the foundation wall that a concrete porch or patio will rest upon for support.**
- **Hawk: A flat wood or metal tool 10 inches to 14 inches square with a handle used by plasterers to carry plaster mortar or mud.**
- **Hazard Insurance: Insurance for a building while it is under construction.**
- **Header: Framing members over windows, doors, or other openings. A beam placed perpendicular to joists and to which joists are nailed in framing for chimney, stairway, or other opening. Also, a wood lintel.**
- **Hearth: The inner or outer floor of a fireplace, usually made of brick, tile, or stone.**
- **Heartwood: The wood extending from the pith to the sapwood, the cells of which no longer participate in the life processes of the tree.**
- **Heat Meter: An electrical municipal inspection of the electric meter breaker panel box.**
- **Heat Pump: A device which uses compression and decompression of gas to heat and/or cool a house.**
- **Heat Rough: Work performed by the heating contractor after the stairs and interior walls are built. This includes installing all duct work and flue pipes. Sometimes the furnace and fireplaces are installed at this stage of construction.**
- **Heat Strengthened Glass: Flat or bent glass that has been heat-treated to a specific surface and/or edge compression range to meet the requirements of ASTM C 1048, kind HS. Heat-strengthened glass is approximately two times as strong as annealed glass of the same thickness when exposed to uniform static pressure loads. Heat-strengthened glass is not considered safety glass and will not completely dice in the manner fully tempered glass will.**
- **Heat Trim: Work done by the heating contractor to get the home ready for the municipal final heat Inspection. This includes venting the hot water heater, installing all vent grills, registers, air conditioning services, turning on the furnace, installing thermostats, venting ranges and hoods, and all other heat related work.**
- **Heating Load: The amount of heating required to keep a building at a specified temperature during the winter, usually 65° Fahrenheit, regardless of outside temperature.**
- **Heel Bead: Sealant applied at the base of a channel, after setting the light or panel and before the removable stop is installed, one of its purposes being to prevent leakage past the stop.**

- **Heel Cut: A notch cut in the end of a rafter to permit it to fit flat on a wall and on the top, doubled, exterior wall plate.**
- **Hermetic Seal: Vacuum seal between panes of a double-paned window, i.e. insulated glass unit or IGU. Failure of a hermetic seal causes permanent fogging between the panels of the IGU.**
- **High-Early Cement: A portland cement sold as Type III which sets up to its full strength faster than other types.**
- **Highlights: A light spot, area, or streak on a painted surface.**
- **Hinge: A jointed or flexible device that allows the turning or pivoting of a part, such as a door or lid, on a stationary frame.**
- **Hip: The external angle formed by the meeting of two sloping sides of a roof.**
- **Hip Rafter: A rafter that forms the intersection of an external roof angle.**
- **Hip Roof: A roof that rises by inclined planes from all four sides of a building.**
- **Hip Shingles: Shingles used to cover the inclined external angle formed by the intersection of two sloping roof planes.**
- **Hoistway: A shaftway for the travel of one or more elevators.**
- **Home Run (Electrical): The electrical cable that carries power from the main circuit breaker panel to the first electrical box, plug, or switch in the circuit.**
- **Honeycomb: Areas in a foundation wall where the aggregate (gravel) is visible. Honeycombs can be usually be remedied by applying a thin layer of grout or other cement product over the affected area. Also, a method by which concrete is poured and not puddled or vibrated, allowing the edges to have voids or holes after the forms are removed.**
- **Horizontal: Parallel to or in the plane of the horizon.**
- **Hose Bib: An outdoor faucet with hose threads on the spout. Also commonly used to supply washing machines and wash basins.**
- **Hot Wire: The wire that carries electrical energy to a receptacle or other device—in contrast to a neutral, which carries electricity away again. Normally the black wire. Also see Ground.**
- **Hub: In plumbing, the enlarged end of a pipe which is made to provide a connection into which the end of the joining pipe will fit.**
- **Humidifier: A device designed to increase the humidity within a room or a house by means of the discharge of water vapor. They may consist of individual room size units or larger units attached to the heating plant to condition the entire house.**
- **Hurricane Clip: Metal straps that are nailed and secure the roof rafters and trusses to the top horizontal wall plate. Sometimes called a Teco Clip.**
- **Hurricane Ties: Metal fasteners used to secure rafters in structures subject to hurricane winds.**
- **HVAC: Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning.**

- **Hydro-Electric Elevator: An elevator where liquid is pumped under pressure directly into the cylinder by a pump driven by an electric motor without an accumulator between the pump and cylinder.**

I

- **I-Beam: A steel beam with a cross section resembling the letter "I." It is used for long spans as basement beams or over wide wall openings, such as a double garage door, when wall and roof loads are imposed on the opening.**
- **I-Joist: Manufactured structural building component resembling the letter "I." Used as floor joists and rafters. I-joists include two key parts: flanges and webs. The flange of the I joist may be made of laminated veneer lumber or dimensional lumber, usually formed into a 1 ½" width. The web or center of the I-joist is commonly made of plywood or oriented strand board (OSB). Large holes can be cut in the web to accommodate duct work and plumbing waste lines. I-joists are available in lengths up to 60 feet long.**
- **ID (Inside Diameter): The diameter measurement taken from the inside of a pipe. A common method for sizing pipe.**
- **IIC: A new system utilized in the Federal Housing Administration recommended criteria for impact sound insulation.**
- **Incandescent Lamp: A lamp employing an electrically charged metal filament that glows at white heat. A typical light bulb.**
- **Incompatibility: Descriptive of two or more materials which are not suitable to be used together.**
- **Indemnification Clause: Provision in a contract in which one party agrees to be financially responsible for specified types of damages, claims, or losses.**
- **Index: The interest rate or adjustment standard that determines the changes in monthly payments for an adjustable rate loan.**
- **Infiltration: The process by which air leaks into a building. To find the infiltration heating load factor (HLF), the formula to account for the extra BTUs needed to heat the infiltrated air is BTU/HR = building volume x air changes x BTU/cu.ft/hr x TD (temperature difference).**
- **Inlet: An opening providing a means of entrance or intake.**
- **INR (Impact Noise Rating): A single figure rating which provides an estimate of the impact sound insulating performance of a floor-ceiling assembly.**
- **Inside Corner: The point at which two walls form an internal angle, as in the corner of a room.**
- **Inside Drain: In roofing, a drain positioned on a roof at some location other than the perimeter. It drains surface water inside the building through closed pipes to a drainage system.**

- **Insulating Glass: Window or door in which two panes of glass are used with a sealed air space between. Also known as Double Glass.**
- **Insulating Glass Unit: Two or more lights of glass spaced apart and hermetically sealed to form a single-glazed unit with an air space between each light. Commonly called IG units.**
- **Insulation: Generally, any material which slows down or retards the flow or transfer of heat. Building insulation types are classified according to form as loose-fill, flexible, rigid, reflective, and foamed-in-place. All types are rated according to their ability to resist heat flow (R-Value). In electrical contracting, rubber, thermoplastic, or asbestos wire covering. The thickness of insulation varies with wire size and type of material, application or other code limitations.**
- **Insulation Board: A rigid structural building board made of coarse wood or cane fiber in 1/2 and 25/32 inch thickness. It can be obtained in various size sheets, in various densities, and with several treatments.**
- **Insulation Fasteners: Any of several specialized mechanical fasteners designed to hold insulation down to a steel or a nailable deck.**
- **Interest: The cost paid to a lender for borrowed money.**
- **Interior Finish: Material used to cover the interior framed areas, or materials of walls and ceilings.**
- **Interior Glazed: Glazing infills set from the interior of the building.**
- **Interlayer: In glazing, any material used to bond two lights of glass and/or plastic together to form a laminate.**
- **Interlocking Shingles: Individual shingles that mechanically fasten to each other to provide wind resistance.**
- **Interply: Between two layers of roofing felts that have been laminated together.**
- **IPS (Iron Pipe Size): Pipe thread sizing system. Also measurement of the outside diameter of a pipe.**
- **IRMA [Insulated (or Inverted) Roof Membrane Assembly]: In this system the roof membrane is laid directly on the roof deck, covered with extruded foam insulation and ballasted with stone, minimum of 1000 lbs. per square.**
- **Irrigation: Lawn sprinkler system.**

J

- **J Channel: Metal edging used on drywall to give the edge a better finished appearance when a wall is not "wrapped." Generally, basement stairway walls have drywall only on the stair side. J Channel is used on the vertical edge of the last drywall sheet.**

- **Jack Post: A type of structural support made of metal which can be raised or lowered through a series of pins and a screw to meet the height required. Basically used as a replacement for an old supporting member in a building. See Monopost.**
- **Jack Rafter: A rafter that spans the distance from the wall plate to a hip, or from a valley to a ridge.**
- **Jamb: The side and head lining of a doorway, window, or other opening.**
- **Joint: The space between the adjacent surfaces of two members or components joined and held together by nails, glue, cement, mortar, or other means.**
- **Joint Cement: A powder that is usually mixed with water and used for joint treatment in gypsum-wallboard finish. Often called "spackle."**
- **Joint Compound: A material applied to threaded connections to help prevent leaks in plumbing. Also, in carpentry, a wet gypsum material applied to sheetrock joints.**
- **Joint Tenancy: A form of ownership in which the tenants own a property equally. If one dies, the other automatically inherits the entire property.**
- **Joint Trench: When the electric company and telephone company dig one trench and "drop" both of their service lines in.**
- **Joist Hanger: A metal "U" shaped item used to support the end of a floor joist and attached with hardened nails to another bearing joist or beam.**
- **Jumpers: Water pipe installed in a water meter pit (before the water meter is installed), or electric wire that is installed in the electric house panel meter socket before the meter is installed. This is sometimes illegal.**

K

- **Keene's Cement: A white finish plaster that produces an extremely durable wall. Because of its density, it excels for use in bathrooms and kitchens and is also used extensively for the finish coat in auditoriums, public buildings, and other places where walls may be subjected to unusually hard wear or abuse.**
- **Keeper: The metal latch plate in a door frame into which a doorknob plunger latch.**
- **Kelvin: Thermometer scale on which a unit of measurement equals the Celsius degree.**
- **Keyless: A plastic or porcelain light fixture that operates by a pull string. Generally found in the basement, crawl space, and attic areas.**
- **Keyway: A slot formed and poured on a footer or in a foundation wall when another wall will be installed at the slot location. This gives additional strength to the joint/meeting point.**
- **Kick Hole: A defect frequently found in perimeter flashings arising from being stepped on or kicked. A small fracture of the base flashing in the area of the cant.**

- **Kiln Dried Lumber: Lumber that has been kiln dried often to a moisture content of 6 to 12 percent. Common varieties of softwood lumber, such as framing lumber are dried to a somewhat higher moisture content.**
- **Kilowatt (KW): One thousand watts. A kilowatt hour is the base unit used in measuring electrical consumption. Also see Watt.**
- **King Stud: The vertical 2×4 frame lumber (left and right) of a window or door opening, and runs continuously from the bottom sole plate to the top plate.**
- **Knife Consistency: Compound formulated in a degree of firmness suitable for application with a putty knife such as used for face glazing and other sealant applications.**
- **Knot: In lumber, the portion of a branch or limb of a tree that appears on the edge or face of the piece.**
- **Kraft: A heavy, water resistant paper.**
- **Kynar Coating: Architectural coating that is UV stable and suitable for exterior use on aluminum and other metal surfaces.**

L

- **Labor Hour: A standard in which one person's labor is performed in one hour.**
- **Ladder, Fixed: A ladder which is permanently attached to a building.**
- **Laminated Glass: Two or more lights of glass permanently bonded together with one or more inter-layers.**
- **Laminated Shingles: Shingles that have added dimensionality because of extra layers or tabs, giving a shakelike appearance. May also be called "architectural shingles" or "three- dimensional shingles."**
- **Laminating: Bonding together two or more layers of materials.**
- **Landing: A platform between flights of stairs or at the termination of a flight of stairs.**
- **Lap: To extend one material partially over another; also, the distance so extended.**
- **Lap Cement: An asphalt-based cement used to adhere overlapping plies of roll roofing.**
- **Lateral (Electric, Gas, Telephone, Sewer and Water): The underground trench and related services (i.e., electric, gas, telephone, sewer and water lines) that will be buried within the trench.**
- **Lath: A building material of wood, metal, gypsum, or insulating board that is fastened to the frame of a building to act as a plaster base.**
- **Lath and Plaster: The most common wall finish prior to the introduction of drywall. Thin wood strips (lath) were nailed onto the framing as a base for the sand/lime plaster.**
- **Lattice: A framework of crossed wood or metal strips.**
- **Lavatory: Bathroom or washroom sink.**

- **Leach field: A method used to treat/dispose of sewage in rural areas not accessible to a municipal sewer system. Sewage is permitted to be filtered and eventually discharged into a section of the lot called a leech field.**
- **Lead: A malleable metal once extensively used for flashings.**
- **Lead Based Paint: Lead is a highly toxic metal that was used for many years in products found in and around our homes. Lead may cause a range of health effects, from behavioral problems and learning disabilities, to seizures and death. Children 6 years old and under are most at risk, because their bodies are growing quickly.**
- **Leader: See Downspout.**
- **Lean-To Roof: The sloping roof of a building addition, having its rafters or supports pitched against and supported by the adjoining wall of a building.**
- **Ledger Strip: A strip of lumber nailed along the bottom of the side of a girder on which joists rest.**
- **Let-In Brace: Nominal 1 inch-thick boards applied into notched studs diagonally.**
- **Level: Term use to describe any horizontal surface whereby all sides are at the same elevation.**
- **Level (Carpenter's Level): A tool used to check for level.**
- **Level Payment Mortgage: A mortgage with identical monthly payments over the life of the loan.**
- **Leveling Rod: A rod with graduated marks for measuring heights or vertical distances between given points and the line of sight of a leveling instrument. They are longer than a yardstick and are held by a surveyor in a vertical position.**
- **Lien: An encumbrance that usually makes real or personal property the security for payment of a debt or discharge of an obligation.**
- **Light: Space in a window sash for a single pane of glass. Also, a pane of glass.**
- **Limit Switch: A safety control that automatically shuts off a furnace if it gets too hot. Most also control blower cycles.**
- **Lineal Foot: A unit of measure for lumber equal to 1 inch thick by 12 inches wide by 12 inches long. Examples: 1″ x 12″ x 16′ = 16 board feet, 2″ x 12″ x 16′ = 32 board feet.**
- **Lintel: A horizontal structural member that supports the load over an opening such as a door or window.**
- **Liquated Damages: A monetary amount agreed upon by two parties to a contract prior to performance under the contract that specifies what a either party owes the other if that party defaults under the contract.**
- **Liquid-Applied Membrane: Generally applied to cast-in-place concrete surfaces in one or more coats to provide fully-adhered waterproof membranes which conform to all contours.**
- **Lite: (Not the beer!) Another term for a pane of glass. Also spelled "light" in industry literature.**

- **Live Load: Loads produced by use and occupancy of the building or other structure and do not include construction or environmental loads such as wind load, snow load, ice load, rain load, seismic load, or dead load.**
- **Load Bearing Wall: A wall which is supporting its own weight and some other structural elements of the house such as the roof and ceiling structures.**
- **Loan: The amount to be borrowed.**
- **Loan to Value Ratio: The ratio of the loan amount to the property valuation and expressed as a percentage; e.g. if a borrower is seeking a loan of $200,000 on a property worth $400,000 it has a 50% loan to value rate. If the loan were $300,000, the LTV would be 75%. The higher the loan to value, the greater the lender's perceived risk. Loans above normal lending LTV ratios may require additional security.**
- **Lookout: A short wood bracket or cantilever to support an overhang portion of a roof or the like, usually concealed from view.**
- **Loose Laid: In roofing, a membrane "laid loosely," i.e. not adhered, over a roof deck or Burm.**
- **Lot: A parcel of ground with boundaries determined by the county.**
- **Louver: An opening with a series of horizontal slats arranged so as to permit ventilation but to exclude rain, sun. light, or vision. See also Attic Ventilators.**
- **Low-Slope Application: Method of installing asphalt shingles on roof slopes between 2 and 4 inches per foot.**
- **Lumber: The product of the sawmill and planing mill not further manufactured other than by sawing, re-sawing, and passing lengthwise through a standard planing machine, crosscutting to length, and matching.**
- **Lumens: Unit of measure for total light output. The amount of light falling on a surface of one square foot.**

M

- **Main Vent (or Stack): Principal vent to which branch vents may be connected. See Stack.**
- **Male IPS: Pipe connection where the threads are on the outside of the fitting. See MIP.**
- **Male Threads: See MIP.**
- **Mansard Roof: A roof which rises by inclined planes from all four sides of a building. The sloping roofs on all four sides have two pitches, the lower pitch usually very steep and the upper pitch less steep.**
- **Mantel: The shelf above a fireplace. Also used in referring to the decorative trim around a fireplace opening.**

- **Manufactured Wood: A wood product such as a truss, beam, Glue Lam or joist which is manufactured out of smaller wood pieces and glued or mechanically fastened to form a larger piece. Often used to create a stronger member which may use less wood. See Oriented Strand Board.**
- **Manufacturers Specifications: The written installation and/or maintenance instructions which are developed by the manufacturer of a product and which may have to be followed in order to maintain the product warrantee.**
- **Mason's Hammer (Bricklayer's Hammer): Tool shaped like a chisel to trim brick or stone.**
- **Masonry: Stone, brick, concrete, hollow-tile, concrete block, gypsum block, or other similar building units or materials or a combination of the same, bonded together with mortar to form a wall, pier, buttress, or similar mass.**
- **Masonry Primer: An asphalt-based primer used to prepare masonry surfaces for bonding with other asphalt products.**
- **Mastic: Heavy-consistency compound that may remain adhesive and pliable with age. Is typically a waterproof compound applied to exterior walls and roof surfaces.**
- **Matched Lumber: Lumber that is dressed and shaped on one edge in a grooved pattern and on the other in a tongued pattern.**
- **Maximum Occupancy Load: The maximum number of people permitted in a room. It is measured per foot for each width of exit door. The maximum is 50 per foot of exit.**
- **Mechanics Lien: A lien on real property, created by statue in many years, in favor of persons supplying labor or materials for a building or structure for the value of labor or materials supplied by them. In some jurisdictions, a mechanics lien also exists for the value of professional services. Clear title to the property cannot be obtained until the claim for the labor, materials, or professional services is settled. Timely filing is essential to support the encumbrance, and prescribed filing dates vary by jurisdiction.**
- **Melt Point: The temperature at which solid asphalt becomes a liquid.**
- **Membrane: A generic term relating to a variety of sheet goods used for certain built-up roofing repairs and application.**
- **Metal Edge: Brake metal or metal extrusions which are secured at the perimeter of the roof to form a weather-tight seal.**
- **Metal Lath: Sheets of metal that are slit and drawn out to form openings. Used as a plaster base for walls and ceilings and as reinforcing over other forms of plaster base.**
- **Microlam: A manufactured structural wood beam. It is constructed of pressure and adhesive bonded wood strands of wood. They have a higher strength rating than solid saw lumber. Normally comes in l ½" thickness' and 9 ½", 11 ½" and 14" widths.**

- **Migration: Spreading or creeping of a constituent of a compound onto/into adjacent surfaces. See bleeding.**
- **Mil Thickness: Measurement used to determine thickness of a coating. 1 mil = .001 inch (1/1000).**
- **Milar (Mylar): Plastic, transparent copies of a blueprint.**
- **Millwork: Generally, all building materials made of finished wood and manufactured in millwork plants and planing mills are included under the term "millwork." It includes such items as inside and outside doors, window and doorframes, blinds, porch work, mantels, panel work, stairways, moldings, and interior trim. It normally does not include flooring, ceiling, or siding.**
- **Mineral Spirits: A by-product of petroleum, clear in color, used as a solvent for asphalt coatings.**
- **Mineral Stabilizers: Finely ground limestone, slate, traprock or other inert materials added to asphalt coatings for durability and increased resistance to fire and weathering.**
- **Mineral-Surfaced Roofing: Asphalt shingles and roll roofing that are covered with granules.**
- **Minispread: A smaller variation of a widespread faucet with separate spout and handles designed small enough to fit 4″ center-to-center faucet holes.**
- **MIP (Male Iron Pipe): Standard threads that are on the outside of a pipe or fitting.**
- **Miter Joint: The joint of two pieces at an angle that bisects the joining angle. For example, the miter joint at the side and head casing at a door opening is made at a 45° angle.**
- **Mixing Valve: A valve that mixes hot and cold water in the valve to obtain a set temperature prior to delivery.**
- **Mobile Home Aluminum Roof Coating: Durable one-coat application prolongs the life of mobile home roofs while reflecting sun's rays and providing a decorative surface.**
  Reduces energy costs.
- **Mock-Up Testing: Controlled air, water and structural performance testing of existing or new glazing systems.**
- **Modified Bitumen Roof: A roof covering that is typically composed of a factory- fabricated composite sheet consisting of a copolymer-modified bitumen, often reinforced with polyester and/or fiberglass, and installed in one or more plies. The membrane is commonly surfaced with field-applied coatings, factory-applied granules or metal foil.**
  The roofing system may incorporate rigid insulation.
- **Modulus: Stress at a given strain. Also tensile strength at a given elongation.**
- **Moisture Content of Wood: Weight of the water contained in the wood, usually expressed as a percentage of the weight of the oven-dry wood.**

- **Molding: A wood strip having a coned or projecting surface used for decorative purposes, e.g., door and window trim.**
- **Monitor: A large structure rising above the surrounding roof planes, designed to give light and/or ventilation to the building interior.**
- **Monopost: Adjustable metal column used to support a beam or bearing point. Normally 11 gauge or Schedule 40 metal, and determined by the structural engineer.**
- **Mopping: In roofing, a layer of hot bitumen mopped between plies of roofing felt. Full mopping is the application of bitumen by mopping in such a manner that the surface being mopped is entirely coated with a reasonably uniform coating. Spot Mopping is the procedure of applying hot bitumen in a random fashion of small daubs, as compared to full mopping. Sprinkle mopping is a special application of installing insulation to the decks. It is done by dipping a roof mop into hot bitumen and sprinkling the material onto the deck. Strip Mopping is the application of bitumen in parallel bands.**
- **Mortar Types: Type M is suitable for general use and is recommended specifically for masonry below grade and in contact with earth, such as foundations, retaining walls and walks. Type M is the strongest type. Type S is suitable for general use and is recommended where high resistance to lateral forces is required. Type N is suitable for general use in exposed masonry above grade and is recommended specifically for exterior walls subject to severe exposures. Type O is recommended for load-bearing walls of solid units where the compressive stresses do not exceed 100 lbs. per square inch and the masonry wall not be subjected to freezing and thawing in the presence of excessive moisture.**
- **Mortgage: Loan secured by land.**
- **Mortgage Broker: A broker who represents numerous lenders and helps consumers find affordable mortgages; the broker charges a fee only if the consumer finds a loan.**
- **Mortgage Company: A company that borrows money from a bank, lends it to consumers to buy homes, then sells the loans to investors.**
- **Mortgage Deed: Legal document establishing a loan on property.**
- **Mortgage Origination Fee: A charge for work involved in preparing and servicing a mortgage application (usually one percent of the loan amount).**
- **Mortgagee: The lender who makes the mortgage loan.**
- **Mortise: A slot cut into a board, plank, or timber, usually edgewise, to receive tenon of another board, plank, or timber to form a joint.**
- **Mud Cracks: Cracks developing from the normal shrinkage of an emulsion coating when applied too heavily.**

- **Mudsill: A wood foundation member, usually a pressure treated 2×4 or 2×6, bolted to the foundation and on which other framing members can be attached.**
- **Mullion: A vertical bar or divider in the frame between windows, doors, or other openings that supports and holds such items as panels, glass, sash, or sections of a curtain wall.**
- **Muntins: Horizontal or vertical bars that divide the sash frame into smaller lights of glass. Muntins are smaller in dimensions and weight than mullions.**
- **Muriatic Acid: Commonly used as a brick cleaner after masonry work is completed.**
- **Mushroom: An unacceptable occurrence when the top of a caisson concrete pier spreads out and hardens to become wider than the foundation wall thickness.**

N

- **NACHI Foundation: A Maryland based charitable organization funded by members of the National Association of Certified Home Inspectors.**
- **Nailer: A piece of lumber secured to non-nailable decks and walls by bolts or other means, which provides a suitable backing onto which roof components may be mechanically fastened.**
- **Natural Finish: A transparent finish which does not seriously alter the original color or grain of the natural wood. Natural finishes are usually provided by sealers, oils, varnishes, water-repellent preservatives, and other similar materials.**
- **Neat Plaster: A base coat plaster which does not contain aggregates and is used where the addition of aggregates on the job is desired.**
- **NEC (National Electrical Code): A set of rules governing safe wiring methods. Local codes—which are backed by law—may differ from the NEC in some ways.**
- **Neoprene: A synthetic rubber having physical properties closely resembling those of natural rubber. It is made by polymerizing chloroprenes, which are produced from acetylene and hydrogen chloride.**
- **Nesting: A method of re-roofing with new asphalt shingles over old shingles in which the top edge of the new shingles is butted against the bottom edge of the existing shingle tab.**
- **Neutral Wire: Usually color-coded white, the neutral wire carries electricity from an outlet back to the service panel. Also see Hot Wire and Ground.**
- **Newel: A post to which the end of a stair railing or balustrade is fastened. Also, any post to which a railing or balustrade is fastened.**
- **Nipple: A short pipe installed between fittings. A pipe coupling that is threaded on both ends.**
- **NM: A type of Romex cable (nonmetallic sheathed cable that contains several conductors). The cable, which is flame-retardant, is limited to use in dry locations only and can not be exposed to excessive moisture.**

- **NMC (Non Metallic Conduit): A type of Romex cable (nonmetallic sheathed cable that contains several conductors). NMC may be used in damp or corrosive locations as well as dry areas.**
- **No-Cutout Shingles: Shingles consisting of a single, solid tab with no cutouts.**
- **Nominal Size: Size used for identification only; not literal dimensions.**
- **Non-Bearing Wall: A wall supporting no load other than its own weight.**
- **Non-Destructive: A phrase describing a method of examining the interior of a component whereby no damage is done to the component itself.**
- **Non-Drying (Non-Curing): A sealant that does not set up or cure. See Butyl.**
- **Non-fibered Aluminum Roof Coating: Thin but efficient reflective barrier to reflect sun's harmful rays and prolong surface life. Also works on metal surfaces.**
- **Non-Sag: A sealant formulation having a consistency that will permit application in vertical joints without appreciable sagging or slumping. This performance characteristic allows the sealant to be installed in a sloped or vertical joint application without appreciable sagging or slumping.**
- **Non-Skinning: Descriptive of a product that does not form a surface skin.**
- **Non-Staining: Characteristic of a compound that will not stain a surface.**
- **Non-Veneer Panel: Any wood-based panel that does not contain veneer and carries an APA span rating, such as wafer board or oriented strand board.**
- **Nonfibered Roof and Foundation Coating: Dual purposed, this thin-viscosity material doubles as a nonfibered roof or foundation coating.**
- **Normal Slope Application: Method of installing asphalt shingles on roof slopes between 4 inches and 21 inches per foot.**
- **Nosing: The projecting edge of a molding or drip. Usually applied to the projecting molding on the edge of a stair tread.**
- **Notch: A crosswise rabbet at the end of a board.**
- **Note: A formal document showing the existence of a debt and stating the terms of repayment.**
- **Nozzle: The tubular tip of a caulking gun through which the compound is extruded.**
- **Nuclear Meter: A device used to detect moisture by measuring slowed, deflected neutrons.**

O

- **O-Ring: Round rubber washer or gasket that is compressed to create a watertight seal, typically in a compression fitting.**
- **O. G. (or Ogee): A molding with a profile in the form of a letter S; having the outline of a reversed curve.**

- **Oakum: Loose hemp or jute fiber that is impregnated with tar or pitch and used to caulk large seams or for packing plumbing pipe joints.**
- **OD (Outside Diameter): A measurement of the diameter of a pipe as taken from the outside edge. A common method for sizing pipe.**
- **Offset: A tubular component which permits the offsetting of a drainage run in the same basic direction.**
- **Ohm's Law: States that, in a given electrical circuit, the amount at current in amps is equal to the pressure in volts divided by the resistance in ohms. The formula is: I (Current) = V voltage or V = I x R R resistance or R = V/I.**
- **Ohmmeter: In electrical contracting, a device to measure the resistance across a load. They are never used on a live circuit. Used to track down broken wires.**
- **Oil-Canning: The term describing distortion of thin-gauge metal panels which are fastened in a manner restricting normal thermal movement.**
- **On Center (O.C.): A measurement term meaning a certain distance between like materials. Studs rafters, joists, and the like in a building placed at 16 inches O.C. will be laid out so that there is 16 inches from the center of one stud to the center of the next.**
- **Open Hole Inspection: When an engineer (or municipal inspector) inspects the open excavation and examines the earth to determine the type of foundation (caisson, footer, wall on ground, etc.) that should be installed in the hole.**
- **Open Valley: Method of valley construction in which shingles on both sides of the valley are trimmed along a chalk line snapped on each side of the valley. Shingles do not extend across the valley. Valley flashing is exposed.**
- **Organic: A term designating any chemical compound which contains carbon and hydrogen.**
- **Organic Felt: An asphalt roofing base material manufactured from cellulose fibers.**
- **Oriented Strand Board (OSB, Chip Board, Wafer 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.**
- **Outrigger: An extension of a rafter beyond the wall line. Usually a smaller member nailed to a larger rafter to form a cornice or roof overhang.**
- **Overhang: That part of the roof structure which extends horizontally beyond the vertical plane of the exterior walls of a building.**
- **Oxidize: To combine with oxygen in the air.**

P

- **P Trap: P-shaped section of drain pipe that prevents sewer odors from escaping into your home. Water is trapped in the pipe blocking gases from escaping through the drain.**
- **Pad Out, Pack Out: To shim out or add strips of wood to a wall or ceiling in order that the finished ceiling/wall will appear correct.**
- **Padding: A material installed under carpet to add foot comfort, isolate sound, and to prolong carpet life.**
- **Paint: A combination of pigments with suitable thinners or oils to provide decorative and protective coatings.**
- **Pallets: Wooden platforms used for storing and shipping bundles of shingles.**
- **Panel: In house construction, a thin flat piece of wood, plywood, or similar material, framed by stiles and rails as in a door or fitted into grooves of thicker material with molded edges for decorative wall treatment.**
- **Parapet Wall: A low wall around the perimeter of a roof deck.**
- **Parge Coat: A thin application of plaster for coating a wall.**
- **Parking Strip: The area in front of a building between the sidewalk and the street usually landscaped with grass. The parking strip serves as a buffer between the road and pedestrians walking on the sidewalk.**
- **Parting Stop or Strip: A small wood piece used in the side and head jambs of double- hung windows to separate upper and lower sash.**
- **Partition: A wall that subdivides spaces within any story of a building.**
- **Patterned Glass: A type of rolled glass having a pattern impressed on one or both sides. Used extensively for light control, bath enclosures and decorative glazing. Sometimes call "rolled," "figured," or "obscure" glass.**
- **Paver Stones: Usually pre-cast concrete slabs used to create a traffic surface.**
- **Payment Schedule: A pre-agreed upon schedule of payments to a contractor usually based upon the amount of work completed. Such a schedule may include a deposit prior to the start of work. Payments are often scheduled for the beginning of the month and allow the contractor to subcontractors and suppliers by the 10th of the month. There may also be a temporary 'holdout' at the end of the contract for any small items which have not been completed.**
- **Pedestal Lavatory: A lavatory in which the bowl is supported by a single pedestal leg.**
- **Penalty Clause: A provision in a contract that provides for a reduction in the amount otherwise payable under a contract to a contractor as a penalty for failure to meet deadlines or for failure of the project to meet contract specifications.**
- **Penny: As applied to nails, it originally indicated the price per hundred. The term now serves as a measure of nail length and is abbreviated by the letter "D."**

- **Penthouse: A relatively small structure built above the plane of the roof.**
- **Percolation Test (Perc Test): Tests that a soil engineer performs on earth to determine the feasibility of installing a leech field type sewer system on a lot. A test to determine if the soil on a proposed building lot is capable of absorbing the liquid affluent from a septic system.**
- **Performance and Payment Bond: Guaranty by a surety company that if a contractor fails to perform under a contract, the surety company will complete the work.**
- **Performance Bond: An amount of money (usually 10% of the total price of a job) that a contractor must put on deposit with a governmental agency as an insurance policy that guarantees the contractors' proper and timely completion of a project or job.**
- **Perimeter Drain: 3″ or 4″ perforated plastic pipe that goes around the perimeter (either inside or outside) of a foundation wall (before backfill) and collects and diverts ground water away from the foundation. Generally, it is "daylighted" into a sump pit inside the home, and a sump pump is sometimes inserted into the pit to discharge any accumulation of water.**
- **Perlite: An aggregate formed by heating and expanding siliceous volcanic glass.**
- **Perm: A measure of water vapor movement through a material (grains per square foot per hour per inch of mercury difference in vapor pressure).**
- **Permanent Set: The amount by which a material fails to return to its original dimensions after being deformed by an applied force or load.**
- **Permit: A governmental authorization to perform a building process as in: Zoning\Use permit – authorization to use a property for a specific use e.g. a factory, a single family residence etc. Grading permit – authorization to change the contour of the land. Septic permit – a health dept. authorization to build or modify a septic system. Building permit – authorization to build or modify a structure. Electrical permit – a separate permit required for most electrical work. Plumbing permit – a separate permit required for new plumbing and larger modifications of existing plumbing systems.**
- **Photo-Oxidation: Oxidation caused by rays of the sun.**
- **Pier: A column of masonry, usually rectangular in horizontal cross section, used to support other structural members.**
- **Pier Block: A concrete block used to support foundation members such as posts, beams, girders and joist.**
- **Pigment: A powdered solid in suitable degree of subdivision for use in paint or enamel.**
- **Pigtails, Electrical: The electric cord that the electrician provides and installs on an appliance such as a garbage disposal, dishwasher, or range hood.**
- **Pilot Hole: A small-diameter, pre-drilled hole that guides a nail or screw.**

- **Pilot Light: A small, continuous flame (in a hot water heater, boiler, or furnace) that ignites gas or oil burners when needed.**
- **Pitch: (a) The incline slope of a roof or the ratio of the total rise to the total width of a house, i.e., an 8-foot rise and 24-foot width is a one-third pitch roof. Roof slope is expressed in the inches of rise per foot of run. A term frequently used to designate coal tar pitch.**
- **Pitch Pan or Pitch Pocket: A container, usually formed of sheet metal, around supporting connections with roof-mounted machinery. Filling the container with pitch, or better yet, plastic roof cement, helps seal out water even when vibration is present.**
- **Pitch Pocket: An opening extending parallel to the annual rings of growth, that usually contains, or has contained, either solid or liquid pitch.**
- **Pith: The small, soft core at the original center of a tree around which wood formation takes place.**
- **PITI: Principal, interest, taxes and insurance (the four major components of monthly housing payments).**
- **Plan Submittal: Submission of construction plans to the city or county in order to obtain a Building Permit.**
- **Plans: See Blue Prints.**
- **Plaster Grounds: Strips of wood used as guides or strike off edges around window and door openings and at base of walls.**
- **Plastic Roof Cement: Used as a waterproofing medium in new construction and as a general-purpose exterior repair and maintenance material. Stops roof and other leaks fast. Available in both summer and winter grades.**
- **Plat: A map of a geographical area as recorded by the county.**
- **Plate: Sill plate: a horizontal member anchored to a masonry wall. Sole plate: bottom horizontal member of a frame wall. Top plate: top horizontal member of a frame wall supporting ceiling joists, rafters, or other members.**
- **Plate Line: The top horizontal line of a building wall upon which the roof rests.**
- **Platform Framing (Platform Construction): A system of framing a building in which floor joists of each story rest on the top plates of the story below or on the foundation sill for the first story, and the bearing walls and partitions rest on the subfloor of each story. (Usually one story constitutes a platform.)**
- **Plenum (or Plenum Chamber): Chamber or container for moving air under a slight positive pressure to which one or more ducts are connected.**
- **Plot Plan: A bird's eye view showing how a building sits on the building lot, typically showing setbacks (how far the building must sit from the road), easements, rights of way, and drainage.**

- **Plough: To cut a lengthwise groove in a board or plank.**
- **Plumb: Exactly perpendicular; vertical.**
- **Plumb Bob: A lead weight attached to a string. It is the tool used in determining plumb.**
- **Plumbing Boots: Metal saddles used to strengthen a bearing wall/vertical stud(s) where a plumbing drain line has been cut through and installed.**
- **Plumbing Ground: The plumbing drain and waste lines that are installed beneath a basement floor.**
- **Plumbing Jacks: Sleeves that fit around drain and waste vent pipes at and are nailed to the roof sheeting.**
- **Plumbing Rough: Work performed by the plumbing contractor after the Rough Heat is installed. This work includes installing all plastic ABS drain and waste lines, copper water lines, bath tubs, shower pans, and gas piping to furnaces and fireplaces. Lead solder should not be used on copper piping.**
- **Plumbing Stack: A plumbing vent pipe that penetrates the roof.**
- **Plumbing Trim: Work performed by the plumbing contractor to get the home ready for a final plumbing inspection. Includes installing all toilets (water closets), hot water heaters, sinks, connecting all gas pipe to appliances, disposal, dishwasher, and all plumbing items.**
- **Plumbing Waste Line: Plastic pipe used to collect and drain sewage waste.**
- **Ply: A term to denote the number of thicknesses or layers of roofing felt, veneer in plywood, or layers in built-up materials, in any finished piece of such material.**
- **Ply Sheet: A layer in built-up roofing.**
- **Plywood: A piece of wood made of three or more layers of veneer joined with glue, and usually laid with the grain of adjoining plies at right angles. Almost always an odd number of plies are used to provide balanced construction.**
- **Pocket (Channel): A three-sided, U-shaped opening in a sash or frame to receive glazing infill. Contrasted to a rabbet, which is a two-sided, L-shaped sections as with face glazed window sash.**
- **Point Load: A point where a bearing/structural weight is concentrated and transferred to the foundation.**
- **Pointing: The process where joints between masonry units, brick, etc., are filled with mortar.**
- **Polished Wired Glass: Wired glass that has been ground and polished on both surfaces.**
- **Polymer: A substance consisting of large molecules which have been formed from smaller molecules of similar make-up.**
- **Polysulfide Sealant: Polysulfide liquid polymer sealant which is mercaptan terminated, long chain aliphatic polymers containing disulfide linkages. They can be converted to rubbers at room temperature without shrinkage upon addition of a curing agent.**

- **Polyurethane Sealant: An organic compound formed by reaction of a glycol with an isocyanate.**
- **Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC): Polymer formed by polymerization of vinyl chloride monomer. Sometimes called vinyl.**
- **Ponding: A condition where water stands on a roof for prolonged periods due to poor drainage and/or deflection of the deck.**
- **Pop Rivets: Fasteners used to join pieces of metal that are installed by either compressed-air-assisted or hand-operated guns. Unique in that they are installed from one side of the work.**
- **Pop-Out: See Stucco Pop-Out.**
- **Pores: Wood cells of comparatively large diameter that have open ends and are set one above the other to form continuous tubes. The openings of the vessels on the surface of a piece of wood are referred to as pores.**
- **Porosity: The density of substance and its capacity to pass liquids.**
- **Portland Cement: A mixture of certain minerals which when mixed with water form a gray colored paste and cure into a very hard mass.**
- **Post: A vertical member of wood, steel, concrete or other material that transfers weight from the top of the post to whatever the post is resting on.**
- **Post & Beam Construction: Most common type of wall framing, using posts which carry horizontal beams on which joists are supported. It allows for fewer bearing partitions and less material.**
- **Post-and-Beam: A basic building method that uses just a few hefty posts and beams to support an entire structure. Contrasts with stud framing.**
- **Pot-Life: The time interval following the addition of an accelerator before chemically curing material will become too viscous to apply satisfactorily. See Shelf Life.**
- **Potable: Water that is safe to drink.**
- **Powder Coat: A technique for applying paint to metal surfaces. The metal is covered with a powder of dry paint particles and is baked in an oven. This causes the powder to melt and harden into a tough, colorful finish.**
- **Power: The energy rate, usually measured in watts. Power equals voltage times amps, or W = E x 1. The heavier the flow of amps at a given supply, the higher the rate at which energy is being supplied and used.**
- **Power Vent: A vent that includes a fan to speed up air flow. Often installed on roofs.**
- **Pre-Shimed Tape Sealant: A sealant having a pre-formed shape containing solids or discrete particles that limit its deformation under compression.**

- **Precast: Concrete building components which are formed and cured at a factory and then transported to a work site for erection.**
- **Premium: Amount payable on a loan.**
- **Preservative: Any substance that, for a reasonable length of time, will prevent the action of wood-destroying fungi, borers of various kinds, and similar destructive agents when the wood has been properly coated or impregnated with it.**
- **Pressure Tank: Used in conjuction with wells to maintain pressure.**
- **Pressure-Reducing Valve: Valve installed in the water service line where it enters the building to reduce the pressure of water in the line to an acceptable pressure used in buildings (40-55 psi desired).**
- **Pressure-Relief Valve: Valve to relieve excess pressure in water storage tanks.**
- **Pressure-Treated Lumber: Lumber that is treated in such a way that the sealer is forced into the pores of the wood.**
- **Primer: A material of relatively thin consistency applied to a surface for the purpose of creating a more secure bonding surface and to form a barrier to prevent migration of components. The first coat of paint in a paint job that consists of two or more coats. Also, the paint used for such a first coat.**
- **Priming: Sealing of a porous surface so that compounds will not stain, lose elasticity, shrink excessively, etc. because of loss of oil or vehicle into the surround.**
- **Principal: The original amount of the loan, the capital.**
- **Projection: In roofing, any object or equipment which pierces the roof membrane.**
- **Property Survey: A survey to determine the boundaries of a property. The cost depends on the complexity of the survey.**
- **Protection Board: In roofing, heavy asphalt impregnated boards which are laid over bituminous coatings to protect against mechanical injury.**
- **Pump Mix: Special concrete that will be used in a concrete pump. Generally, the mix has smaller rock aggregate than regular mix.**
- **Punch List: A list of discrepancies that need to be corrected by the contractor.**
- **Punch Out: To inspect and make a discrepancy list.**
- **Purlins: A horizontal structural member spanning between beams or trusses to support a roof deck. In slope glazing, purlins are the horizontal framing members.**
- **Push Stick: In hardware, a tool used when cutting a short board on a table saw.**
- **Putty: A type of cement usually made of whiting and boiled linseed oil, beaten or kneaded to the consistency of dough, and used in sealing glass in sash, filling small holes and crevices in wood, and for similar purposes.**

- **PVC or CPVC (PolyVinyl Choride): A type of white plastic pipe sometimes used for water supply lines.**
- **PVD (Physical Vapor Deposition): A very durable titanium or zirconium coating that resists tarnish, scratches, and corrosion. It is used mostly to protect faucets with a brass finish.**
- **PVDF: Architectural coating. See Kynar Coating.**

Q

- **Quarry Tile: A man-made or machine-made clay tile used to finish a floor or wall. Generally, 6″X6″X1/4″ thick.**
- **Quarter Round: A small molding that has the cross section of a quarter circle.**
- **Quartersawn Grain: Another term for edge grain.**
- **Quick-Setting Cement: An asphalt-based cement used to adhere tabs of strip shingles to the course below. Also used to adhere roll roofing laps applied by the concealed nail method.**
- **Quote or Quotation: A price provided by a contractor, sub-contractor, or vendor to funish materials, labor and/or both. Quotes differ from estimates in that an estimate is a best guess of the cost involved.**

R

- **R-Value: The thermal resistance of a glazing system. The R-value is the reciprocal of the U-value. The higher the R value, the less heat is transmitted throughout the glazing material.**
- **Rabbet: A rectangular, longitudinal groove cut in the corner edge of a board or plank.**
- **Radial Saw: A circular saw which hangs from a horizontal arm or beam and slides back and forth. The arm pivots from side to side to allow for angle cuts and bevels. When sawing finish plywood, the good side should face up as the saw cuts on the down stroke.**
- **Radiant Heating: A method of heating, usually consisting of a forced hot water system with pipes placed in the floor, wall, or ceiling, or with electrically heated panels.**
- **Radiation: Any heated surface loses heat to cooler surrounding space or surfaces through radiation. The earth receives its heat from the sun by radiation. The heat rays are turned into heat as they strike an object which will absorb some or all of the heat transmitted.**
- **Radiator: A heating unit which is supplied heat through a hot water system.**
- **Radon: A naturally-occurring, radioactive gas which is heavier than air and is common in many parts of the country. Radon gas exposure is associated with lung cancer.**
  Mitigation measures may involve crawl space and basement venting and various forms of vapor barriers.

- **Radon System: A ventilation system beneath the floor of a basement and/or structural wood floor and designed to fan exhaust radon gas to the outside of the home.**
- **Rafter: A sloping roof member that supports the roof covering which extends from the ridge or the hip of the roof to the eaves. A common rafter is one which runs square with the plate and extends to the ridge. A hip rafter extends from the outside angle of the plate towards the apex of the roof. They are 2″ deeper or wider than common rafters. A valley rafter extends from an inside angle of the plates toward the ridge of the house.**
- **Rafter Tail: The portion of a rafter that extends past the building to form the eaves.**
- **Rafter, Hip: A rafter that forms the intersection of an external roof angle.**
- **Rafter, Valley: A rafter that forms the intersection of an internal roof angle. The valley rafter is normally made of double 2-inch-thick members.**
- **Raggle Block: A specially designed masonry block having a slot or opening into which the top edge of the roof flashing is inserted and anchored.**
- **Rail: Cross members of panel doors or of a sash. Also the upper and lower members of a balustrade or staircase extending from one vertical support, such as a post, to another.**
- **Railroad Tie: Black, tar and preservative impregnated, 6″x8″ and 6′-8′ long wooden timber that was used to hold railroad track in place. Normally used as a member of a retaining wall.**
- **Rake: Trim members that run parallel to the roof slope and form the finish between the wall and a gable roof extension. The angle of slope of a roof rafter, or the inclined portion of a cornice.**
- **Rake Edge: The overhang of an inclined roof plane beyond the vertical wall below it.**
- **Rake Fascia: The vertical face of the sloping end of a roof eave.**
- **Rake Siding: The practice of installing lap siding diagonally.**
- **Ranch: A single story, one level home.**
- **Random-Tab Shingles: Shingles on which tabs vary in size and exposure.**
- **Rankin: Thermometer scale on which unit of measurement equals the Fahrenheit degree.**
- **Raw Linseed Oil: The crude product processed from flaxseed and usually without much subsequent treatment.**
- **Ready Mixed Concrete: Concrete mixed at a plant or in trucks en route to a job and delivered ready for placement.**
- **Rebar: Reinforcing bar used to increase the tensile strength of concrete.**
- **Receptacle: An electrical outlet. A typical household will have many 120 volt receptacles for plugging in lams and appliances and 240 volt receptacles for the range, clothes dryer, air conditioners, etc.**

- **Recording Fee: A charge for recording the transfer of a property, paid to a city, county, or other appropriate branch of government.**
- **Redline, Red Lined Prints: Blueprints that reflect changes and that are marked with red pencil.**
- **Reducer: See bushing.**
- **Reflective Glass: Glass with a metallic coating to reduce solar heat gain.**
- **Reflective Insulation: Sheet material with one or both sun faces of comparatively low heat emissivity, such as aluminum foil. When used in building construction the surfaces face air spaces, reducing the radiation across the air space.**
- **Refrigerant: A substance that remains a gas at low temperatures and pressure and can be used to transfer heat. Freon is an example and is used in air conditioning systems.**
- **Register: A fixture through which conditioned air flows. In a gravity heating system, it is located near the baseboard. In an air conditioning system, it is located close to the thermostat.**
- **Reglaze: To replace a broken window.**
- **Reglet: A horizontal slot, formed or cut in a parapet or other masonry wall, into which the top edge of counter-flashing can be inserted and anchored. In glazing, a reglet is typically a pocket or keyway extruded into the framing for installing the glazing gaskets.**
- **Reinforced Concrete: A combination of steel and concrete using the best properties of each. The steel consists of rebar or reinforcing bars varying from 3/8 ” to 2 1/4 ” in diameter and is placed before concrete is poured.**
- **Reinforced Masonry: Masonry units, reinforcing steel, grout and/or mortar combined to act together to strengthen the masonry structure.**
- **Reinforcing: Steel rods or metal fabric placed in concrete slabs, beams, or columns to increase their strength.**
- **Relative Heat Gain: The amount of heat gain through a glass product taking into consideration the effects of solar heat gain (shading coefficient) and conductive heat gain (U-value).**
- **Relative Humidity: The amount of water vapor in the atmosphere, expressed as a percentage of the maximum quantity that could be present at a given temperature. (The actual amount of water vapor that can be held in space increases with the temperature.)**
- **Release Tape: A plastic or paper strip that is applied to the back of self-sealing shingles. This strip prevents the shingles from sticking together in the bundles, and need not be removed for application.**
- **Remote: Remote electrical, gas, or water meter digital readouts that are installed near the front of the home in order for utility companies to easily read the home owners usage of the service.**
- **Resilient Flooring: A durable floor cover that has the ability to resume its original shape.**

- **Resistance: The internal structure of wires even in the best conductors opposes the flow of electric current and converts some current into heat. This internal friction-like effect is called resistance and is measured in ohms. Resistance equals Voltage divided by Amperage.**
- **Resorcinol Glue: A glue that is high in both wet and dry strength and resistant to high temperatures. It is used for gluing lumber or assembly joints that must withstand severe service conditions.**
- **Retaining Wall: A structure that holds back a slope and prevents erosion.**
- **Retentions: Amounts withheld from progress billings until final and satisfactory project completion.**
- **Return: In heating and cooling systems, a vent that returns cold air to be warmed. In a hot air furnace system, it is located near an inside wall.**
- **Ribbon (or Girt): Normally a 1″x4″ board let into the studs horizontally to support ceiling or second-floor joists.**
- **Ridge: The horizontal line at the junction of the top edges of two sloping roof surfaces.**
- **Ridge Board: The board placed on edge at the ridge of the roof into which the upper ends of the rafters are fastened.**
- **Ridge Cut: The end cut on a rafter that fits to the ridgeboard.**
- **Ridgeboards: Horizontal support at the ridge of a roof to which opposing rafters are attached.**
- **Rigid Metal Conduit: This conduit resembles plumbing pipe, protecting wires from damage.**
- **Rise: In stairs, the vertical height of a step or flight of stairs.**
- **Riser: Each of the vertical boards closing the spaces between the treads of stairways.**
- **Road Base: An aggregate mixture of sand and stone.**
- **Rock 1, 2, 3: When referring to drywall, this means to install drywall to the walls and ceilings (with nails and screws), and before taping is performed.**
- **Roll Roofing: Roofing material, composed of fiber and satin rated with asphalt, that is supplied in 36-inch wide rolls with 108 square feet of material. Weights are generally 45 to 90 pounds per roll.**
- **Roll, Rolling: To install the floor joists or trusses in their correct place. (To "roll the floor" means to install the floor joists).**
- **Romex: A non-metallic sheathed cable consisting of two or more insulated conductors having an outer sheath of moisture resistant, non-metallic material. The conductor insulation is rubber, neoprene, thermoplastic or a moisture resistant flame retardant fibrous material. There are two types: NM and NMC – described earlier.**
- **Roof Deck: See deck.**

- **Roof Sheathing: The boards or sheet material fastened to the roof rafters on which the shingle or other roof covering is laid.**
- **Roof System: General term referring to the waterproof covering, roof insulation, vapor barrier, if used and roof deck as an entity.**
- **Roofing Tape: An asphalt-saturated tape used with asphalt cements for flashing and patching asphalt roofing.**
- **Root Cellar: Food storage area with a dirt floor.**
- **Rough: In hardware, metal fastenings on cabinets which are usually concealed, like staples.**
- **Rough Flooring: Materials used to form an unfinished floor. Floor sheathing.**
- **Rough Opening: The opening in a wall into which a door or window is to be installed.**
- **Rough Plumbing: All plumbing that should be done before the finish trades (sheetrock, painting, etc), including all waste lines and supply water lines that are in the walls or framing of the building. See also: Plumbing, Sub Rough, and Finish Plumbing.**
- **RPM: Revolutions per Minute.**
- **Rubber Emulsion Paint: Paint, the vehicle of which consists of rubber or synthetic rubber dispersed in fine droplets in water.**
- **Rubber-Tired Roller: A roller with rubber tires commonly used for compacting trimmed subgrade or aggregate base or clay type soils.**
- **Run (Roofing): The horizontal distance between the eaves and the ridge of the roof, being half the span for a symmetrical gable roof. Also, the net width of a step or the horizontal distance covered by a flight of stairs.**

S

- **Saber Saw: A saw that cuts on the upstroke, good side of wood faces down.**
- **Sack Mix: The amount of Portland cement in a cubic yard of concrete mix. Generally, 5 or 6 sack is required in a foundation wall.**
- **Saddle: Two sloping surfaces meeting in a horizontal ridge, used between the back side of a chimney, or other vertical surface, and a sloping roof.**
- **Sales Contract: A contract between a buyer and seller which should explain: (1) What the purchase includes, (2) What guarantees there are, (3) When the buyer can move in, (4) What the closing costs are, and (5) What recourse the parties have if the contract is not fulfilled or if the buyer cannot get a mortgage commitment at the agreed upon time.**
- **Sand Float Finish: Lime mixed with sand, resulting in a textured finish.**
- **Sanitary Sewer: A sewer system designed for the collection of waste water from the bathroom, kitchen and laundry drains, and is usually not designed to handle storm water.**

- **Sanitary T: Used on the waste side of plumbing to keep effluent flowing the correct direction.**
- **Sapwood: The outer zone of wood, next to the bark. In the living tree it contains some living cells (the heartwood contains none), as well as dead and dying cells. In most species, it is lighter colored than the heartwood. In all species, it is lacking in decay resistance.**
- **Sash: A single light frame containing one or more lights of glass.**
- **Sash Balance: A device, usually operated by a spring or tensioned weatherstripping designed to counterbalance double-hung window sash.**
- **Saturant: Asphalt used to impregnate a felt-base material.**
- **Saturated Felt: A felt which is impregnated with tar or asphalt.**
- **SBS-Modified: Asphalt that has been combined with SBS (styrene-butadiene-styrene) polymers to increase its elasticity.**
- **Scale: The relationship between actual measurements on a page of plans or blue prints and the actual measurements of the building represented by the plans or blue prints.**
- **Schedule (Window, Door, Mirror): A table on the blueprints that list the sizes, quantities and locations of the windows, doors and mirrors.**
- **Scrap Out: The removal of all drywall material and debris after the home is "hung out" (installed) with drywall.**
- **Scratch Coat: The first coat of plaster, which is scratched to form a bond for the second coat.**
- **Screed or Screeding: The wood or metal straightedge used to strike off or level newly placed concrete when doing cement work. Screeds can be the leveling device used or the form work used to level or establish the level of the concrete. Screeds can be hand used or mechanical.**
- **Scribing: Fitting woodwork to an irregular surface. In moldings, cutting the end of one piece to fit the molded face of the other at an interior angle to replace a miter joint.**
- **Scrim: A woven or mat-type fabric that is used as a membrane sandwich between other material to provide reinforcement and stretch resistance.**
- **Scupper: An outlet in the wall of a building or a parapet wall for drainage of water from a flat roof.**
- **Scutch: A bricklayer's cutting tool used for dressing and trimming brick to a special shape. It resembles a small pick.**
- **Sealant: An elastomeric material with adhesive qualities applied between components of a similar or dissimilar nature to provide an effective barrier against the passage of the elements.**
- **Sealer: A finishing material, either clear or pigmented, that is usually applied directly over uncoated wood for the purpose of sealing the surface.**
- **Seasoning: Removing moisture from green wood in order to improve its serviceability.**

- **Seat: The fixed part of a valve. The stem assembly will move up and down against the seat to open and close the valve.**
- **Self Rimming: A style of bathroom lavatory or kitchen sink with a finished lip or rim that installs on top of a counter without requiring a metal sink rim.**
- **Self-Healing: A term used to describe to a material which melts with the heat from the sun's rays, and seals over cracks that were earlier formed from other causes. Some waterproof membranes are self-healing.**
- **Self-Leveling: A term used to describe a viscous material that is applied by pouring. In its uncured state, it spreads out evenly.**
- **Selvage: The unsurfaced strip along a sheet of roll roofing which forms the under portion at the lap in the application of the roof covering.**
- **Semigloss (Paint or Enamel): A paint or enamel made with a slight insufficiency of nonvolatile vehicle so that its coating, when dry, has some luster but is not very glossy.**
- **Separation: In concrete application, when concrete is dropped directly with a flat chute causing the concrete to separate, usually occurring at a 1:2 slope.**
- **Service Conductor: In electrical contracting, the supply conductors that extend from the street main or from the transformer to the service equipment.**
- **Service Drop: In electrical contracting, the overhead service conductors from the last pole or other aerial support to and including the splices, if any, connecting to the service entrance conductors at the building.**
- **Setback Thermostat: A thermostat with a clock which can be programmed to various temperatures at different times of the day/week. Usually used as the heating or cooling system thermostat.**
- **Setting Blocks: Generally rectangular cured extrusions of neoprene, EPDM, silicone, rubber or other suitable material on which the glass product bottom edge is placed to effectively support the weight of the glass.**
- **Settlement: Shifts in a structure, usually caused by freeze-thaw cycles underground.**
- **Sewage Ejector: A pump used to 'lift' waste water to a gravity sanitary sewer line. Usually used in basements and other locations which are situated bellow the level of the side sewer.**
- **Sewer Lateral: The portion of the sanitary sewer which connects the interior waste water lines to the main sewer lines. The side sewer is usually buried in several feet of soil and runs from the house to the sewer line. It is usually 'owned' by the sewer utility, must be maintained by the owner and may only be serviced by utility approved contractors.**

  Sometimes called side sewer.

- **Sewer Stub: The junction at the municipal sewer system where the home's sewer line is connected.**
- **Sewer Tap: The physical connection point where the home's sewer line connects to the main municipal sewer line.**
- **Shading: Slight differences in shingle color that may occur as a result of normal manufacturing operations.**
- **Shading Coefficient: The ratio of the solar heat gain through a specific glass product to the solar heat gain through a lite of 1/8″ (3mm) clear glass.**
- **Shake: A thick handsplit shingle, resawed to form two shakes; usually edge-grained.**
- **Sheathing: The structural covering, usually wood boards, plywood, gypsum or wood fiber, used over studs or rafters of framed buildings as the first layer of outer wall covering nailed to the studs or rafters.**
- **Sheathing Paper: A building material, generally paper or felt, used in wall and roof construction as a protection against the passage of air and sometimes moisture.**
- **Shed Roof: A roof having only one slope or pitch, with only one set of rafters which fall from a higher to a lower wall.**
- **Sheet Metal Duct Work: The heating system. Usually round or rectangular metal pipes and sheet metal (for return Aar) and installed for distributing warm (or cold) air from the furnace to rooms in the home.**
- **Sheet Metal Work: All components of a house employing sheet metal, such as flashing, gutters, and downspouts.**
- **Sheetrock: Panels made primarily from gypsum installed over the framing to form the interior walls and ceilings. Sheetrock is often called gypsum board.**
- **Shelf-Life: Used in the glazing and sealant business to refer to the length of time a product may be stored before beginning to lose its effectiveness. Manufacturers usually state the shelf life and the necessary storage conditions on the package.**
- **Shellac: A transparent coating made by dissolving lac, a resinous secretion of the lac bug (a scale insect that thrives in tropical countries, especially India), in alcohol.**
- **Shingles: Roof covering of asphalt, wood, tile, slate, or other material cut to stock lengths, widths, and thicknesses, which are laid in a series of overlapping rows as a roof covering on pitched roofs.**
- **Shiplap Lumber: Lumber that is edge-dressed to make a close rabbeted or lapped joint.**
- **Shore "A" Hardness: Measure of firmness of a compound by means of a Durometer Hardness Gauge. A hardness range of 20-25 is about the firmness of an art gum eraser. A hardness of about 90 is about the firmness of a rubber heel.**

- **Shoring: A temporary support erected in a trench or other excavation to support the walls from caving in.**
- **Short Circuit: A situation that occurs when hot and neutral wires come in contact with each other. Fuses and circuit breakers protect against fire that could result from a short.**
- **Shutoff Valve: The valve that allows water supply to be cut off to one fixture without affecting the water supply to the entire house or building. Common for use with clawfoot tubs, sinks, and toilets.**
- **Shutter: Usually lightweight louvered or flush wood or nonwood frames in the form of doors located at each side of a window. Some are made to close over the window for protection; others are fastened to the wall as a decorative device.**
- **Side Sewer: The portion of the sanitary sewer which connects the interior waste water lines to the main sewer lines. The side sewer is usually buried in several feet of soil and runs from the house to the sewer line. It is usually 'owned' by the sewer utility, must be maintained by the owner and may only be serviced by utility approved contractors.**
  Sometimes called sewer lateral.
- **Siding: The finish covering of the outside wall of a frame building, whether made of horizontal weatherboards, vertical boards with battens, shingles, or other material.**
- **Sight Line: The line along the perimeter of glazing infills corresponding to the top edge of stationary and removable stops. The line to which sealants contacting the glazing infill are sometimes finished off.**
- **Silicone Sealant: A sealant having as its chemical compound a backbone consisting of alternating silicon-oxygen atoms.**
- **Sill: The lowest member of the frame of a structure, resting on the foundation and supporting the floor joists or the uprights of the wall. The member forming the lower side of an opening, as in a door sill, window sill, etc.**
- **Sill Cock: An exterior water faucet (hose bib).**
- **Sill Plate: The framing member anchored to the foundation wall upon which studs and other framing members will be attached. It is the bottom plate of exterior walls.**
- **Sill Seal: Fiberglass or foam insulation installed between the foundation wall and sill (wood) plate. Designed to seal any cracks or gaps.**
- **Sill Sealer: A material placed between the top of the foundation wall and the sill plate. Usually a foam strip, the sill sealer helps make a better fit and eliminate water problems.**
- **Sill Step: The first step coming directly off a building at the door openings.**
- **Single Coverage: Asphalt roofing that provides one layer of roofing material over the deck.**

- **Single Family Dwelling (SFD): A house built for the purpose of a single family as opposed to multi families such as a duplex or apartment complex.**
- **Single Ply: A descriptive term signifying a roof membrane composed of only one layer of material such as EPDM, Hypalon or PVC.**
- **Single Tee: The name given to a type of precast concrete deck which has one stiffening rib integrally cast into slab.**
- **Skip Sheathing: The normal base for shake, shingle and some tile roofs. 1″x4″ or similar sized boards are nailed at 90 degree angles to the rafters leaving a space of about 4″ between each row and allowing for better ventilation.**
- **Sky Dome: A type of skylight exhibiting a characteristic translucent plastic domed top.**
- **Skylight: A structure on a roof that is designed to admit light and is somewhat above the plane of the roof surface.**
- **Slab on Grade: A type of construction in which footings are needed but little or no foundation wall is poured.**
- **Slab, Concrete: Concrete pavement, i.e. driveways, garages, and basement floors.**
- **Slab, Door: A rectangular door without hinges or frame.**
- **Slag: A by-product of smelting ore such as iron, lead or copper. Also overburden/dropping from welding which may burn, melt, or discolor adjacent surfaces.**
- **Slate: A dark gray stratified stone cut relatively thin and installed on pitched roofs in a shingle like fashion.**
- **Sleeper: Usually, a wood member embedded in concrete, as in a floor, that serves to support and to fasten subfloor or flooring.**
- **Sleeve(s): Pipe installed under the concrete driveway or sidewalk, and that will be used later to run sprinkler pipe or low voltage wire.**
- **Slope: Incline or pitch of roof surface.**
- **Sloped Glazing: Any installation of glass that is at a slope of 15 degrees or more from vertical.**
- **Sludge: Term for the waste material found in sump pump pits, septic systems and gutters.**
- **Slump: The "wetness" of concrete. A 3 inch slump is dryer and stiffer than a 5 inch slump.**
- **Slump-Test: Measures the consistency of a concrete mix or its stiffness. If the tests results are high, one likely cause would be too much water. Low slump test results mean not enough water. The test is measured in inches.**
- **Smooth-Surfaced Roofing: Roll roofing that is covered with ground talc or mica instead of granules.**
- **Soffit: The underside of an overhanging cornice of a building extending out from the plane of the building walls.**

- **Softening Point: The temperature at which a substance changes from a hard material to a softer and more viscous material.**
- **Soil Cover (Ground Cover): A light covering of plastic film, roll roofing, or similar material used over the soil in crawl spaces of buildings to minimize moisture permeation of the area.**
- **Soil Stack: A general term for the vertical main of a system of soil, waste, or vent piping.**
- **Sole Plate: Bottom horizontal member of a frame wall.**
- **Solid Bridging: A solid member placed between adjacent floor joists near the center of the span to prevent joists from twisting.**
- **Sonotube: Round, large cardboard tubes designed to hold wet concrete in place until it hardens.**
- **Sound Attenuation: Sound proofing a wall or subfloor, generally with fiberglass insulation.**
- **Space Heat: Heat supplied to the living space, for example, to a room or the living area of a building.**
- **Spacers (Shims): Small blocks of neoprene, EPDM, silicone or other suitable material placed on each side of the glass product to provide glass centering, maintain uniform width of sealant bead and prevent excessive sealant distortion.**
- **Spalling: The chipping or flaking of concrete, bricks, or other masonry where improper drainage or venting and freeze/thaw cycling exists.**
- **Span: The horizontal distance between structural supports such as walls, columns, piers, beams, girders, and trusses.**
- **Spandrel: The panels of a wall located between vision areas of windows, which conceal structural columns, floors, and shear walls.**
- **Spec Home: A house built before it is sold. The builder speculates that he can sell it at a profit.**
- **Specialty Eaves Flashing Membrane: A self-adhering waterproofing shingle underlayment designed to protect against water infiltration due to ice damage or wind- driven rain.**
- **Specification: Detailed written instructions which, when clear and concise, explain each phase of work to be done.**
- **Splash Block: A small masonry block laid with the top close to the ground surface to receive roof drainage from downspouts and to carry it away from the building.**
- **Splitting: The formation of long cracks completely through a membrane. Splits are frequently associated with lack of allowance for expansion stresses. They can also be a result of deck deflection or change in deck direction.**
- **Spud: The removal of gravel or heavy accumulations of bitumen from roof membranes by means of chipping or scraping.**
- **Square: A unit of measure, e.g. 100 square feet, usually applied to roofing material. Sidewall coverings are sometimes packed to cover 100 square feet and are sold on that basis.**

- **Square Foot: Coverage measured by multiplying width by length. An area 5 foot long and 7 foot wide is equal to 35 square foot.**
- **Squeegie: Fine pea gravel used to grade a floor (normally before concrete is placed).**
- **Stack: The vertical pipe of a system of soil, waste or vent piping.**
- **Stack Vent: Also called a waste vent or soil vent, it is the extension of a soil or waste stack above the highest horizontal drain connected to the stack.**
- **Stain: A form of oil paint, very thin in consistency, intended for coloring wood with rough surfaces, such as shingles, without forming a coating of significant thickness or gloss.**
- **Stair Carriage: Supporting member for stair treads. Usually a 2-inch plank notched to receive the treads; sometimes called a "rough horse."**
- **Standard Practices of the Trade(s): One of the more common basic and minimum construction standards. This is another way of saying that the work should be done in the way it is normally done by the average professional in the field.**
- **Standing Seam: A type of joint often used on metal roofs.**
- **Static Load: The total amount of permanent non-moving weight that is applied to given surface areas.**
- **Static Vent: A vent that does not include a fan.**
- **STC (Sound Transmission Class): A single number rating derived from individual transmission losses at specified test frequencies. It is used for interior walls, ceilings and floors.**
- **Steel Inspection: A municipal and/or engineer's inspection of the concrete foundation wall, conducted before concrete is poured into the foundation panels. Done to insure that the rebar (reinforcing bar), rebar nets, void material, beam pocket plates, and basement window bucks are installed and wrapped with rebar and complies with the foundation plan.**
- **Steel Trowel: Tool used for non-porous smooth finishes of concrete. It is a flat steel tool used to spread and smooth plaster, mortar or concrete. Pointing trowels are small enough to be used in places where larger trowels will not fit. The pointing trowel has a point. The common trowel has a rectangular blade attached to a handle. For smooth finish, use a trowel when the concrete begins to stiffen.**
- **Stem: A small shaft or rod that projects through the faucet valve and to which the handle is installed.**
- **Stem Assembly: The moving part of a valve that controls the amount and temperture of water released by moving up and down against the seat to open and close the valve.**
- **Step Croack: Hairline, "staircase"-type steps near the corners of the foundation, usually due to normal soil settlement. Larger such cracks may indicate ongoing movement or sinking of the foundation and are much more grave.**

- **Step Flashing: Individual small pieces of metal flashing material used to flash around chimneys, dormers, and such projections along the slope of a roof. The individual pieces are overlapped and stepped up the vertical surface.**
- **Stick Built: A house built without prefabricated parts. Also called conventional building.**
- **Stile: An upright framing member in a panel door.**
- **STL (Sound Transmission Loss): The reduction of the amount of sound energy passing through a wall, floor, roof, etc. It is related to the specific frequency at which it is measured and it is expressed in decibels. Also called "Transmission Loss."**
- **Stool: A flat molding fitted over the window sill between jambs and contacting the bottom rail of the lower sash.**
- **Stop: See shutoff valve.**
- **Stop Box: Normally a cast iron pipe with a lid (5″ in diameter) that is placed vertically into the ground, situated near the water tap in the yard, and where a water cut-off valve to the home is located (underground). A long pole with a special end is inserted into the curb stop to turn off/on the water.**
- **Stop Order: A formal, written notification to a contractor to discontinue some or all work on a project for reasons such as safety violations, defective materials or workmanship, or cancellation of the contract.**
- **Storm Door: A panel or sash door placed on the outside of an existing door to provide additional protection from the elements.**
- **Storm Sash or Storm Window: An extra window usually placed outside of an existing one, as additional protection against cold weather.**
- **Storm Sewer: A sewer system designed to collect storm water and is separated from the waste water system.**
- **Storm Window: A glazed panel or sash placed on the inside or outside of an existing sash or window as additional protection against the elements.**
- **Story: That part of a building between any floor and the floor or roof next above.**
- **Straight Stop: A shutoff valve that is installed on a supply line between the floor and the faucet or toilet. Unlike an angle stop, a straight stop does not change the direction of water flow.**
- **Strain: The percentage of elongation or compression of a material or portion of a material caused by an applied force.**
- **Striking Off: The operation of smoothing off excess compound or sealant at sight line when applying same around lites or panels.**
- **String (or Stringer): A timber or other support for cross members in floors or ceilings. In stairs, the support on which the stair treads rest; also Stringboard.**

- **String Line: A nylon line usually strung tightly between supports to indicate both direction and elevation, used in checking grades or deviations in slopes or rises. Used in landscaping to level the ground.**
- **Strip Flooring: Wood flooring consisting of narrow, matched strips.**
- **Structural Floor: A framed lumber floor that is installed as a basement floor instead of concrete. This is done on very expansive soils.**
- **Structural Silicone Glazing: The use of a silicone sealant for the structural transfer of loads from the glass to its perimeter support system and retention of the glass in the opening.**
- **Stub: See Rough-In.**
- **Stucco: A type of exterior finish. Most commonly refers to an outside plaster made with Portland cement as its base.**
- **Stud: One of a series of wood or metal vertical structural members placed as supporting elements in walls and partitions.**
- **Stud Framing: A building method that distributes structural loads to each of a series of relatively lightweight studs. Contrasts with Post-and-Beam.**
- **Stud Shoe: A metal, structural bracket that reinforces a vertical stud. Used on an outside bearing wall where holes are drilled to accommodate a plumbing waste line.**
- **Sub-Rough: That part of a building's plumbing system that is done before the cement is poured.**
- **Subcontractor: A contractor who specializes in a particular trade such as waterproofing.**
- **Subfloor: Boards or plywood laid on joists over which a finish floor is to be laid.**
- **Substrate: A part or substance which lies below and supports another.**
- **Sump: Pit or large plastic bucket/barrel inside the home designed to collect ground water from a perimeter drain system.**
- **Sump Pump: A submersible pump in a sump pit that pumps any excess ground water to the outside of the home.**
- **Suspended Ceiling: A ceiling system supported by hanging it from the overhead structural framing.**
- **Sway Brace: Metal straps or wood blocks installed diagonally on the inside of a wall from bottom to top plate, to prevent the wall from twisting, racking, or falling over "domino" fashion.**
- **Switch: A device that completes or disconnects an electrical circuit.**

T

- **T Bar: A ribbed "T" shaped bar with a flat metal plate at the bottom that is driven into the earth. Normally used with chain link fence poles, and to mark locations of a water meter pit.**
- **Tab: The exposed portion of strip shingles defined by cutouts.**

- **Tail Beam: A relatively short beam or joist supported in a wall on one end and by a header at the other.**
- **Tailpiece: The tubular part of a lavatory drain that runs from the drain flange to the trap.**
- **Take Off: The material necessary to complete a job.**
- **Taping: Applying joint tape over embedding compound in the process of joint treatment of drywall.**
- **Tear-Off: In roofing, a term used to describe the complete removal of the built up roof membrane and insulation down to and exposing the roof deck.**
- **Teco: Metal straps that are nailed to secure the roof rafters and trusses to the top horizontal wall plate. Sometimes called a Hurricane Clip.**
- **Tee: A T-shaped fitting with three openings.**
- **Tempered: Strengthened. Tempered glass will not shatter nor create shards, but will "pelletize" like an automobile window. Required in tub and shower enclosures, entry door glass, sidelight glass and in windows where the window sill is less than 16″ to the floor.**
- **Termite Shield: A shield, usually of non-corrodible metal, placed in or on a foundation wall or other mass of masonry or around pipes to prevent passage of termites.**
- **Termites: Insects that superficially resemble ants in size, general appearance, and habit of living in colonies; hence, they are frequently called "white ants." Subterranean termites establish themselves in buildings not by being carried in with lumber, but by entering from ground nests after the building has been constructed. If unmolested, they eat the woodwork, leaving a shell of sound wood to conceal their activities, and damage may proceed so far as to cause collapse of parts of a structure before discovery. There are about 56 species of termites known in the United States but the two major ones, classified by the manner in which they attack wood, are ground inhabiting or subterranean termites (the most common) and dry wood termites, which are found almost exclusively along the extreme southern border and the Gulf of Mexico in the United States.**
- **Terneplate: Sheet iron or steel coated with an alloy of lead and tin.**
- **Terracotta: A ceramic material molded into masonry units.**
- **Texture Paint: Paint which may be manipulated by brush, trowel or other to give various patterns.**
- **Thermal Insulation: Any material high in resistance to heat transmission that, when placed in the walls, ceiling, or floors of a structure, will reduce the rate of heat flow.**
- **Thermal Movement: The measured amount of dimensional change that a material exhibits as it is warmed or cooled.**
- **Thermal Shock: The stress built up by sudden and appreciable changes in temperature.**

- **Thermopane Window: Compased of a double layer of glass positioned side by side with a thin strip of foam material bonding the two layers of window glass together to form the storm window design.**
- **Thermoplastic Material: Solid material which is softened by increasing temperatures and hardened by decreasing temperatures.**
- **Thermoply™: Exterior laminated sheathing nailed to the exterior side of the exterior walls. Normally ¼" thick, 4×8 or 4×10 sheets with an aluminumized surface.**
- **Thermostat: A device which relegates the temperature of a room or building by switching heating or cooling equipment on or off.**
- **Thermostatic Valve: A mixing valve that automatically maintains the temperature setting by regulating fluctuations in water temperature at the water inlets and immediately adjusting the ratio of hot and cold water that is discharged by the valve.**
- **Three-Dimensional Shingles: See Laminated Shingles.**
- **Three-Phase: In electrical contracting, a wiring system consisting of 4 wires and used in industrial and commercial applications. This system is suitable for installations requiring large motors. It consists of three hot wires and one ground wire. The voltage in each hot wire is out of phase with the others by 1/3 of a cycle, as if produced by 3 different generators.**
- **Threshold: A strip of wood or metal with beveled edges used over the finish floor and the sill of exterior doors.**
- **Thru-Wall Flashing: Flashing extended completely through a masonry wall. Designed and applied in combination with counter-flashings, to prevent water which may enter the wall above from proceeding downward in the wall or into the roof deck or roofing system.**
- **THW: Moisture and heat resistant thermoplastic conductor. It is flame retardant, moisture and heat resistant and can be used in dry or wet locations.**
- **Tie-In: In roofing, a term used to describe the joining of a new roof with the old.**
- **Tilt-Up Wall: Cast concrete units which are preformed which, when cured, are tilted to their vertical position and secured by mechanical fasteners to prior erected structural steel. May be pre-cast.**
- **Timbers: Yard lumber 5 or more inches in least dimension. Includes beams, stringers, posts, caps, sills, girders, and purlins.**
- **Time and Materials Contract: A contract which specifies a price for different elements of the work such as: cost per hour of labor, overhead, profit etc. Such a contract may not have a maximum price or may state a 'price not to exceed.'**
- **Tinner: Another name for the heating contractor.**

- **Tinted Glass: Glass with colorants added to the basic glass batch that give the glass color as well as light and heat-reducing capabilities. The color extends throughout the thickness of the glass.**
- **Tip Up: The downspout extension that directs water (from the home's gutter system) away from the home. They typically swing up when mowing the lawn, etc.**
- **Title: Evidence (usually in the form of a certificate or deed) of a person's legal right to ownership of a property.**
- **Title 24: A set of federal laws that mandates the construction industry to conserve energy.**
- **TJI or TJ: Manufactured structural building component resembling the letter "I." Used as floor joists and rafters. I-joists include two key parts: flanges and webs. The flange may be made of laminated veneer lumber or dimensional lumber, usually formed into a 1½" width. The web is commonly made of plywood or oriented strand board (OSB).**

  Large holes can be cut in the web to accommodate duct work and plumbing waste lines. I-joists are available in lengths up to 60" long.
- **Toe Bead: Sealant applied at the intersection of the outboard glazing stop and the bottom of the glazing channel. It must be sized to provide a seal to the edge of the glass.**
- **Toe-Nailing: To drive a nail at a slant to the initial surface in order to permit it to penetrate into a second member.**
- **Tongue and Groove: A type of flooring where the tongue of one board is joined to the groove of another board.**
- **Tooling: The operation of pressing in and striking a sealant in a joint to press the sealant against the sides of a joint and secure good adhesion; the finishing off of the surface of a sealant in a joint so that it is flush with the surface.**
- **Top Chord: The upper or top member of a truss.**
- **Top Mopping: The finished mopping of hot bitumen on a built-up roof.**
- **Top Mount Faucet: See Centerset.**
- **Top Plate: Top horizontal member of a frame wall.**
- **Torch Down Roof (Single Ply or Modified Bitumen): A newer roofing material mostly used on flat roofs. This material usually comes in rolls and is applied to the roof with an open flame or 'torch.'**
- **Torching: Applying direct flame to a membrane for the purpose of melting, heating or adhering.**
- **Transit: A surveyor's instrument used by builders to establish points and elevations both vertically and horizontally. It can be used to line up stakes or to plumb walls or to measure the angle of elevation from a horizontal plane.**
- **Transmitter (Garage Door): The small push-button device that causes the garage door to open or close.**

- **Trap: A plumbing fitting that holds water to prevent air, gas, and vermin from backing up into a fixture.**
- **Tread: The horizontal board in a stairway on which the foot is placed.**
- **Treated Lumber: A wood product which has been impregnated with chemicals to reduce damage from wood rot or insects. Often used for the portions of a structure which is likely to be in ongoing contact with soil and water. Wood may also be treated with a fire retardant.**
- **Tremie: A tube with removable sections and a funnel at the top used in concrete application. The bottom is kept beneath the surface of the concrete and raised as the form is filled and is used to pour concrete underwater.**
- **Trim: The finish materials in a building, such as moldings applied around openings (window trim, door trim) or at the floor and ceiling of rooms (baseboard, cornice, and other moldings).**
- **Trim (Exterior): The finish materials on the exterior of a building, such as moldings applied around openings (window trim, door trim), siding, windows, exterior doors, attic vents, crawl space vents, shutters, etc. Also, the physical work of installing these materials.**
- **Trim (Interior): The finish materials in a building, such as moldings applied around openings (window trim, door trim) or at the floor and ceiling of rooms (baseboard, cornice, and other moldings). Also, the physical work of installing interior doors and interior woodwork, to include all handrails, guardrails, stairway balustrades, mantles, light boxes, base, door casings, cabinets, countertops, shelves, window sills and aprons, etc.**
- **Trim (Plumbing, Heating, Electrical): The work that the "mechanical" contractors perform to finish their respective aspects of work when the home is nearing completion and occupancy.**
- **Trim Kit: Refers to the outside decorative parts that conceal a faucet rough-in.**
- **Trimmer: A beam or joist to which a header is nailed in framing for a chimney, stairway, or other opening.**
- **Triple-Glazed Window: The most energy efficient window. Gases are sealed between three panes of glass and Low E coatings are applied on two of the panes. This can bring the energy efficiency up to a value of R10 at the center point of the glass.**
- **Truss: A frame or jointed structure designed to act as a beam of long span, while each member is usually subjected to longitudinal stress only—either tension or compression.**
- **Tub Trap: A curved, "U" shaped section of a bath tub drain pipe that holds a water seal to prevent sewer gasses from entering the home through tubs water drain.**
- **Tube and Knob Wiring: A common form of electrical wiring used before World War II. When in good condition it may still be functional for low amperage use such as smaller light fixture.**
- **Tuck-Pointing: The re-grouting of defective mortar joints in a masonry or brick wall.**
- **Turnkey: A term used when the subcontractor provides all materials (and labor) for a job.**

- **Turpentine: A volatile oil used as a thinner in paints and as a solvent in varnishes. Chemically, it is a mixture of terpenes.**
- **TW: A moisture-resistant thermoplastic conductor that can be used in dry or wet locations, has no outer covering and is not heat-resistant.**
- **Two-Part Sealant: A product composed of a base and curing agent or accelerator, necessarily packaged in two separate containers which are uniformly mixed just prior to use.**

U

- **U-Value: A measure of air-to-heat transmission (loss or gain) due to the thermal conductance and the difference in indoor and outdoor temperatures. As the U-value decreases, so does the amount of heat that is transferred through the glazing material. The lower the U-value, the more restrictive the fenestration product is to heat transfer.**
  Reciprocal of R-value.
- **U.L. (Underwriters Laboratories): A private research firm located in the United States that attempts to classify and determine the safety of various materials and products.**
- **Ultraviolet: The invisible rays of the spectrum of light which are at its violet end. Sometimes abbreviated U.V.**
- **Ultraviolet Degradation: A reduction in certain performance limits caused by exposure to ultraviolet light.**
- **Undercoat: A coating applied prior to the finishing or top coats of a paint job. It may be the first of two of three coats. In some usage of the word it may become synonymous with priming coat.**
- **Undercounter: A style of lavatory which is positioned under the cutout of the countertop.**
- **Underground Plumbing: The plumbing drain and waste lines that are installed beneath a basement floor.**
- **Underlayment: A material placed under finish coverings, such as flooring, or shingles, to provide a smooth, even surface for applying the finish.**
- **Union: A plumbing fitting that joins pipes end-to-end so they can be dismantled.**
- **Union Nut: A fitting that joins two sections of pipe.**
- **Uprights: Vertical members supporting the sides of a trench.**
- **Utility Easement: The area of the earth that has electric, gas, or telephone lines. These areas may be owned by the homeowner, but the utility company has the legal right to enter the area as necessary to repair or service the lines.**
- **UV Rays: Ultraviolet rays from the sun.**

V

- **Vacuum Breaker: An anti-siphon device that prevents waste water from being drawn back into supply lines, potentially contaminating the water supply. A type of backflow preventer.**
- **Valley: The internal angle formed by the junction of two sloping sides of a roof.**
- **Valley Rafter: A rafter that forms the intersection of an internal roof angle. The valley rafter is normally made of double 2-inch-thick members.**
- **Valley Shield: A quality underlayment for added protection in the heavy water flow areas of a roof. This self adhering product has a waterproof asphalt coating which offers excellent elongation and recovery properties for accommodating roof expansion and contraction and structural movement.**
- **Valuation: An inspection carried out for the benefit of the mortgage lender to ascertain if a property is a good security for a loan.**
- **Valuation Fee: The fee paid by the prospective borrower for the lender's inspection of the property. Normally paid upon loan application.**
- **Valve: A device to stop, start or regulate the flow of liquid or gas through or from piping.**
- **Vapor: The gaseous form of any substance.**
- **Vapor Barrier: A membrane which is placed between the insulation and the roof deck to retard water vapor in the building from entering the insulation and condensing into liquid water.**
- **Vapor Retarder: Any substance that prevents the transmission of water vapor.**
- **Variable Rate: An interest rate that will vary over the term of the loan.**
- **Varnish: A thickened preparation of drying oil, or drying oil and resin suitable for spreading on surfaces to form continuous, transparent coatings, or for mixing with pigments to make enamels.**
- **Vehicle: The liquid portion of a finishing material; it consists of the binder (non-volatile) and volatile thinners.**
- **Veining: In roofing, the characteristic lines or "stretch marks" which develop during the aging process of soft bitumens.**
- **Veneer: Thin sheets of wood made by rotary cutting or slicing a log.**
- **Vent: A pipe or duct which allows flow of air as an inlet or outlet.**
- **Vent Pipe: A vertical pipe of relatively small dimensions which protrudes through a roof to provide for the ventilation of gasses.**
- **Vent Stack: A vertical vent pipe installed for the purpose of providing circulation of air to and from any part of a drainage system.**
- **Vent System: In plumbing, a system to provide a flow of air to or from a drainage system or to provide circulation of air within such system to protect traps seals from siphonage and back pressure.**

- **Ventilator: Device installed on the roof for the purpose of ventilating the interior of the building.**
- **Venting: The process of installing roof vents in a roof assembly to relieve vapor pressure. The process of water in the insulation course of the roof assembly evaporating and exiting via the roof vents.**
- **Vermiculite: An aggregate somewhat similar to perlite that is used as an aggregate in lightweight roof decks and deck fills. It is formed from mica, a hydrous silicate with the ability of expanding on heating to form lightweight material with insulation quality. Used as bulk insulation and also as aggregate in insulating and acoustical plaster and in insulating concrete.**
- **Vertical: Being or situated at right angles to the horizon; upright.**
- **Veterans Administration (VA): A federal agency that insures mortgage loans with very liberal down payment requirements for honorably discharged veterans and their surviving spouses.**
- **Viscosity: The internal frictional resistance offered by a fluid to change of shape or to the relative motion or flow of its parts.**
- **Visible Light Transmittance: The percentage of visible light (390 to 770 nanometers) within the solar spectrum that is transmitted through glass.**
- **Visqueen: A 4 mil or 6 mil plastic sheeting.**
- **Visual Mock-Up: Small scale demonstration of a finished construction product.**
- **Vitreous China: A non-porous ceramic that is coated with a ceramic glaze to form toilets and lavatories.**
- **Void: A cardboard rectangular box that is installed between the earth (between caissons) and the concrete foundation wall. Used when expansive soils are present.**
- **Volatile Thinner: A liquid that evaporates readily and is used to thin or reduce the consistency of finishes without altering the relative volumes of pigment and non-volatile vehicles.**
- **Voltage: The driving force behind the flow of electricity somewhat like pressure is in a water pipe. Most homes are wired with '110' and '220' volt lines. The '110' volt power is used for lighting and most of the other circuits. The '220' volt power is usually used for the kitchen stove, water heater and dryer. (The terms '110' and '220' volts are a short hand, e.g. a '110' volt line is usually rated at 117 volts plus or minus 10%).**
- **Voltmeter: Measures the voltage flowing through a circuit.**

W

- **Wafer Board: See Oriented Strand Board.**
- **Walk-Through: A final inspection of a home before "closing" to look for and document problems that need to be corrected.**

- **Walkways: Designated areas for foot traffic.**
- **Wall Out: When a painter spray paints the interior of a home.**
- **Wane: Bark, or lack of wood from any cause, on edge or corner of a piece of wood.**
- **Warping: Any distortion in a material.**
- **Warrantee: In construction there are two general types of warrantees. One is provided by the manufacturer of a product such as roofing material or an appliance. The second is a warrantee for the labor. For example, a roofing contract may include a 30 year material warrantee and a 5 year labor warrantee. Many (but not all) new homes come with a one year warrantee. Any major issues found during the first year should be communicated the builder at once. Small items can be saved up and presented to the builder in a letter on the 11 month anniversary of the closing. This gives the builder one month to make the necessary corrections.**
- **Waste and Overflow: A bathtub drain assembly that has an outlet at the top to remove overflow water when filling the tub and an outlet at the bottom to remove waste water when the tub is drained.**
- **Waste Pipe and Vent: Plastic plumbing pipe that carries waste water to the municipal sewage system.**
- **Water Board: Water resistant drywall to be used in tub and shower locations. Normally green or blue colored.**
- **Water Closet: Toilet.**
- **Water Meter Pit (or Vault): The box, cast iron bonnet and concrete rings that contain the water meter.**
- **Water Repellant Coating: Transparent coating or sealer applied to the surface of concrete and masonry surfaces to repel water.**
- **Water Repellent Preservative: A liquid designed to penetrate into wood and impart water repellency and a moderate preservative protection. It is used for millwork, such as sashes and frames, and is usually applied by dipping.**
- **Water Table: The location of the underground water, and the vertical distance from the surface of the earth to this underground water.**
- **Water Tap: The connection point where the home water line connects to the main municipal water system.**
- **Water Vapor: Moisture existing as a gas in air.**
- **Water-Cement Ratio: The strength of a concrete mixture depends on the water cement ratio. The water and cement form a paste. If the paste is made with more water, the concrete becomes weaker. Traditionally, concrete mixes have been identified in terms of the ratio of cement to fine aggregate to coarse aggregate. For example, the ratio 1:2:4 refers to a mix which consists of 1 cu.**

ft. of cement, 2 cu. ft. of sand and 4 cu. ft. of gravel. Cement and water are the two chemically active elements in concrete and when combined, form a paste or glue which coats and surrounds the particles of aggregate and upon hardening binds the entire mass together.

- Waterproofing: The process where a building component is made totally resistant to the passage of water and/or water vapor.
- Wattage: The electrical unit of power. A kilowatt is 1000 watts and electric customers are billed on how many kilowatts of power they have used.
- Wax Ring Job: Removing a toilet from the floor so that a blockage can be manually removed or to replace a degraded wax ring. Replacing a new wax ring on the bottom of the toilet to create a seal.
- WC: An abbreviation for water closet (toilet).
- Weatherization: Work on a building exterior in order to reduce energy consumption for heating or cooling. Work involving adding insulation, installing storm windows and doors, caulking cracks and putting on weather-stripping.
- Weatherstrip: Jamb-width or narrower sections of thin metal or other material to prevent infiltration of air and moisture around windows and doors. Compression weather stripping prevents air infiltration, provides tension, and acts as a counter balance.
- Weep Hole: A hole which allows for drainage of entrapped water from masonry or glazing structures.
- Weep Screed: Tool used to drain moisture from concrete.
- Weld: The joining of components together by fusing. In thermoplastics, refers to bonding together of the membrane using heat or solvents.
- Well Casing: A steel or plastc pipe which serves as the lining of a well, preventing it from caving in and protecting ground water from contamination by surface water.
- Well Casing Head: A heavy, flanged steel fitting connected to the first string of casing.
- Well House: A structure that encloses a well Commonly found in the Midwest and Western States.
- Wet or Dry Surface Plastic Roof Cement: Superior performance in cold and wet applications. Performs as a general-purpose exterior repair and maintenance material on damp or dry surfaces. Stops roof and other leaks fast.
- Wet Seal: Application of an elastomeric sealant between the glass and sash to form a weather tight seal.
- Whole House Fan: A fan designed to move air through and out of a home and normally installed in the ceiling.

- **Widespread: A style of lavatory faucet where the spout and handles are separate. Flex hoses are used between the spout and handles to allow adjustable centers, although this style of faucet is typically used on 8″ or 12″ centers.**
- **Wind Bracing: Metal straps or wood blocks installed diagonally on the inside of a wall from bottom to top plate, to prevent the wall from twisting, racking, or falling over in a "domino" fashion.**
- **Wind Uplift: The upward force exerted by wind traveling across a roof.**
- **Window Buck: Square or rectangular box that is installed within a concrete foundation or block wall. A window will eventually be installed in this "buck" during the siding stage of construction.**
- **Window Frame: The stationary part of a window unit; the window sash fits into the window frame.**
- **Window Sash: The operating or movable part of a window; the sash is made of window panes and their border.**
- **Wire Nut: A plastic device used to connect bare wires together.**
- **Wire Size: Conductors for building wiring are available in AWG (American Wire Gauge) sizes ranging from No. 14 to 4/0. The larger the number size, the smaller the diameter. For example, 10 is smaller than 8. The larger the diameter of a wire, the lesser the resistance.**
- **Wonderboard™: A panel made out of concrete and fiberglass usually used as a ceramic tile backing material. Commonly used on bathtub decks.**
- **Wood Filler: A heavily pigmented preparation used for fining and leveling off the pores in open-pored woods.**
- **Wood Rays: Strips of cells extending radially within a tree and varying in height from a few cells in some species to 4 inches or more in oak. The rays serve primarily to store food and to transport it horizontally in the tree.**
- **Wood-Fiber Plaster: Consists of calcified gypsum integrally mixed with selected coarse cellulose fibers which provide bulk and greater coverage. It is formulated to produce high-strength base coats for use in highly fire-resistant ceiling assemblies.**
- **Work-Life: The time during which a curing sealant remains suitable for use after being mixed with a catalyst.**
- **Woven Valley: Method of valley construction in which shingles from both sides of the valley extend across the valley and are woven together by overlapping alternate courses as they are applied. The valley flashing is not exposed.**
- **Wrapped Drywall: Areas that get complete drywall covering, as in the doorway openings of bifold and bipass closet doors.**

Y

- **Y: A "Y" shaped plumbing fitting.**
- **Yard Lumber: Lumber of those grades, sizes, and patterns which are generally intended for ordinary construction, such as framework and rough coverage of houses.**
- **Yard of Concrete: One cubic yard of concrete is 3'x3'x3′ in volume, or 27 cubic feet. One cubic yard of concrete will pour 80 square feet of 3 ½" sidewalk or basement/garage floor.**
- **Yoke: The location where a home's water meter is installed between two copper pipes, and located in the water meter pit in the yard.**

Z

- **Z-bar Flashing: Bent, galvanized metal flashing that's installed above a horizontal trim board of an exterior window, door, or brick run. It prevents water from getting behind the trim/brick and into the home.**
- **Zone: The section of a building that is served by one heating or cooling loop because it has noticeably distinct heating or cooling needs. Also, the section of property that will be watered from a lawn sprinkler system.**
- **Zone Valve: A device, usually placed near the heater or cooler, which controls the flow of water or steam to parts of the building; it is controlled by a zone thermostat.**
- **Zoning: A governmental process and specification which limits the use of a property, e.g. single family use, high rise residential use, industrial use, etc. Zoning laws may limit where you can locate a structure.**