

## **YOU CAN MAXIMIZE THE CHANCES THAT YOUR HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECT WILL SUCCEED**

Here are 10 ways to maximize the chances that your home improvement or business construction project will succeed:

1. Hire an architect. You need an expert advocate who can document exactly what needs to be done and can oversee the builder to ensure that it is done correctly. This is what an independent architect does.
2. Builders who offer to "design/build" your project are really telling you that their bid is "lowball" and will surely go up as the designer gets fancier and talks you into their good ideas.
3. TANSTAAFL (There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch). In other words, you only get what you pay for. Get more than 1 estimate for the work to be done. If one estimate is significantly different than another, there is something wrong with one of them. Find out before you sign.
4. Read the contract you are signing. If you don't understand *any* of the words or phrases, get them explained before you sign the contract. Know your rights and obligations and the builder's rights and obligations. In case of doubt, the contract will control--not what you were verbally promised.
5. Once you have a signed contract, don't forget that *any* change will increase the cost. Even the most minor change will do this.
6. Be sure that the contract provides that at least 10% of the final price will not be paid until after *all* the work is completed and the "punch list" has been signed off on by your architect.
7. Everything costs at least twice what you think it will and will take twice as long as much as you thought it should.
8. When budgeting for a project, add at least 10% for contingencies.
9. Be sure you check references. And check with the local courts, licensing board or county for complaints. When you find complaints, find out what projects didn't go well and be sure to ask why. Then

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figure out if you can avoid those problems.

10. Just because the project passed code doesn't mean it was done right. Passing Code usually means that it won't fall down, burn up or explode. It doesn't mean it was done right.

## **How KAUFMAN LAW, A Professional Corporation, can help you.**

We help businesses and individuals that do construction and renovation projects that cost tens of thousands of dollars and millions of dollars. Ideally the process is started when you call us before you sign the first contract. At that time we will review the contract, ensure that you know what your rights and obligations are, what the rights and obligations of the builder are, and help you negotiate a proper balance between you.

If you are coming to us after having signed the contract, when a problem has arisen, we review the your contract and send a letter to the builder documenting the problems and requiring a firm answer on whether or not the builder will live up to the contract. If the builder is willing to fix the problems we monitor the work and enforce the builder's obligations under the contract.

If the builder is not willing to live up to its obligations under the contract, we will file the lawsuit or demand for arbitration (if required by the contract) to enforce the contract. At the same time, if you desire, we will help you find a builder to help finish the project.

### **OUR FEES:**

Our fees are based on how much work is required to negotiate, monitor, and enforce the contract. Please see the FAQs on Fees and Retainers for more information.

### **DISCLAIMER:**

The information provided by this fact sheet is for informational purposes only and should not be relied on as legal advice. Every case and situation is different and a lawyer should be consulted to determine how the law is applied.

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