

Custom Home Building Timeline Guide

What to Expect from Start to Finish

By Kevin Rea, Master Builder Since 1977

Introduction

Building a custom home is a journey that typically takes 12 to 24 months from initial concept to move-in day. Understanding the timeline helps you plan effectively and reduces stress throughout the process. This guide breaks down each phase so you know exactly what to expect.

Timeline Overview

Phase	Duration	Cumulative
Pre-Design	1-2 months	1-2 months
Design	3-6 months	4-8 months
Permitting	1-3 months	5-11 months
Construction	8-14 months	13-25 months
Total	12-24 months	

Phase 1: Pre-Design (1-2 Months)

Week 1-2: Initial Consultation

Your journey begins with a conversation about your vision, lifestyle, and budget. During this phase, we discuss your must-haves and nice-to-haves, review your lot (or help you find one), and establish a preliminary budget range.

Key Activities:

- Initial meeting with builder
- Lifestyle and needs assessment
- Budget discussion
- Lot evaluation or selection

Week 3-4: Lot Due Diligence

If you haven't purchased land yet, this is the time to evaluate options. If you own a lot, we'll conduct a thorough site analysis to understand what we're working with.

Site Analysis Includes:

- Topographic survey
- Soil and geotechnical testing
- Utility availability assessment
- HOA and CC&R review
- View and solar orientation study

Week 5-8: Team Assembly

Building a custom home requires a team of professionals. During this phase, we help you assemble the right team for your project.

Team Members:

- Architect or designer
- Structural engineer

- Interior designer (optional)
 - Landscape architect (optional)
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Phase 2: Design (3-6 Months)

Month 1-2: Schematic Design

The architect develops initial concepts based on your vision and site conditions. This phase involves exploring different layouts, massing options, and overall design direction.

Deliverables:

- Floor plan concepts (2-3 options)
- Basic exterior elevations
- Site plan showing home placement
- Preliminary square footage

Your Role:

- Provide feedback on concepts
- Make decisions on overall direction
- Refine program requirements

Month 2-3: Design Development

Once you've selected a direction, the design is refined with more detail. This phase includes material selections, window and door locations, and more precise drawings.

Deliverables:

- Refined floor plans
- Detailed elevations
- Preliminary material selections
- Updated budget estimate

Your Role:

- Review and approve drawings
- Begin selecting major materials
- Finalize room sizes and layouts

Month 3-4: Construction Documents

The architect produces detailed drawings that will be used for permitting and construction. These documents include all the technical information needed to build your home.

Deliverables:

- Complete architectural drawings
- Structural engineering
- Mechanical, electrical, plumbing plans
- Specifications

Month 4-6: Interior Design (Concurrent)

While construction documents are being prepared, you'll work with an interior designer to select finishes, fixtures, and furnishings.

Selections Include:

- Flooring materials
 - Cabinetry and millwork
 - Countertops
 - Plumbing fixtures
 - Lighting fixtures
 - Paint colors
 - Tile and stone
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Phase 3: Permitting (1-3 Months)

Week 1-2: Permit Submission

We submit your plans to the local building department and any other required agencies (fire marshal, health department for septic, etc.).

Typical Submissions:

- Building permit application
- Septic permit (if applicable)
- HOA architectural review
- Fire district review

Week 3-8: Plan Review

The building department reviews your plans for code compliance. This process can take 4-8 weeks depending on the jurisdiction and complexity of your project.

During This Time:

- Respond to plan check comments
- Make any required revisions
- Finalize contractor agreements

Week 8-12: Permit Issuance

Once all reviews are complete and fees are paid, permits are issued and construction can begin.

Phase 4: Construction (8-14 Months)

Month 1: Site Preparation

Construction begins with preparing your lot for building.

Activities:

- Clear trees and vegetation
- Grade and level the site
- Install temporary utilities
- Set up erosion control
- Excavate for foundation

Month 2: Foundation

The foundation is the literal base of your home and must be done correctly.

Activities:

- Form and pour footings
- Install foundation walls
- Waterproofing and drainage
- Backfill and compaction
- Slab preparation (if applicable)

Month 3-4: Framing

This is when your home really starts to take shape. The framing phase is exciting because you can finally walk through your future home.

Activities:

- Floor framing
- Wall framing
- Roof framing
- Sheathing
- Window and door installation

Month 4-5: Mechanical Rough-In

With the frame complete, the mechanical systems are installed before walls are closed up.

Activities:

- Plumbing rough-in
- Electrical wiring
- HVAC ductwork
- Low-voltage wiring (data, audio, security)
- Inspections

Month 5-6: Insulation and Drywall

The home is sealed and interior walls are finished.

Activities:

- Insulation installation
- Air sealing
- Drywall hanging
- Drywall taping and finishing
- Texture application

Month 6-7: Exterior Finishes

While interior work continues, the exterior is completed.

Activities:

- Roofing installation
- Siding and trim
- Stone or masonry work
- Exterior painting
- Garage doors

Month 7-10: Interior Finishes

This is the longest phase and involves all the details that make your home unique.

Activities:

- Cabinetry installation
- Countertop fabrication and installation
- Tile work
- Hardwood flooring
- Interior trim and millwork
- Interior painting
- Stair railings

Month 10-12: Final Details

The home comes together with fixtures, appliances, and final touches.

Activities:

- Plumbing fixtures
- Light fixtures
- Appliance installation
- Hardware
- Final paint touch-ups
- Cleaning

Month 12-14: Landscaping and Punch List

The final phase includes exterior improvements and addressing any remaining items.

Activities:

- Landscaping installation
- Driveway and walkways
- Irrigation system

- Final inspections
 - Punch list completion
 - Certificate of occupancy
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Factors That Affect Timeline

Weather

Central Oregon winters can slow exterior work. Plan for potential delays from November through March.

Material Lead Times

Custom items like windows, cabinetry, and specialty materials can have lead times of 8-16 weeks. Early ordering is essential.

Decision Making

Delays in making selections or approving changes can extend the timeline. Stay engaged and make decisions promptly.

Site Conditions

Unexpected rock, poor soil, or other site issues can add time to the foundation phase.

Complexity

More complex designs with custom details take longer than simpler homes.

Tips for Staying on Schedule

1. **Make decisions early:** Complete all selections before construction begins
2. **Stay engaged:** Attend weekly meetings and respond promptly to questions

3. **Avoid changes:** Changes during construction cause delays and cost increases
 4. **Trust the process:** Your builder has done this many times
 5. **Plan for contingencies:** Build buffer time into your move-out plans
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Conclusion

Building a custom home requires patience, but the result is a home perfectly tailored to your lifestyle. Understanding the timeline helps you plan effectively and enjoy the journey.

At Rea Co Homes, we keep you informed every step of the way with regular updates, weekly meetings, and an open-door policy. Contact us to discuss your timeline.

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