



# PLANNING GUIDE

## The Barndominium Process

Section 8:  
Is General Contracting  
Right for Me?

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# IS GENERAL CONTRACTING Right for Me?

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In this section we will cover:

**Responsibilities of a GC**

**Services Provided by the GC**

**General Tips**

**Choosing + Hiring a General Contractor**

**Build Stages + GC Planning**

In residential home building the general contractor (GC) is in charge of the project. They are responsible for the final outcome and all aspects of construction. They will be the point of contact for subcontractors and need to be able to answer questions and supply information to necessary parties.

The general contractor is typically named as the builder on the permit, so any assumed warranties or responsibilities rest on them post construction.

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF A

## General Contractor

What does it mean to be a general contractor? The role of the general contractor is to effectively manage the home build. When it comes to your barndominium build there is usually an option to hire a GC or DIY your general contracting.

**IF YOU'RE CONSIDERING BEING YOUR OWN GC, YOU WILL NEED TO BE COMFORTABLE WITH THE FOLLOWING:**

### Research

- You're the one who needs to have all of the answers. The general contractor is in charge of the project from start to finish.
- There will be a lot you do not know when you first get started. If you have never managed a new construction project before, be prepared to spend a significant amount of time planning.
- While there are resources such as the MR Post Frame Patreon membership available, many elements of your project will be specific to your location, design, and timeline. Lots of things don't have a "one size fits all" answer.



How comfortable am I with this part of being a GC?



### Organization

- If you're doing this on your own then you're probably making all of your selections for your home with little to no assistance. As the general contractor you want to have available specifications for all of your finishes, appliances, etc. If there are things outside of standard hookup or placement your contractor needs to be aware.
- Have conversations with the various contractors you hire on who will be responsible to purchase and bring items on site such as plumbing fixtures, lighting switches, and more.

How comfortable am I with this part of being a GC?



# RESPONSIBILITIES OF A

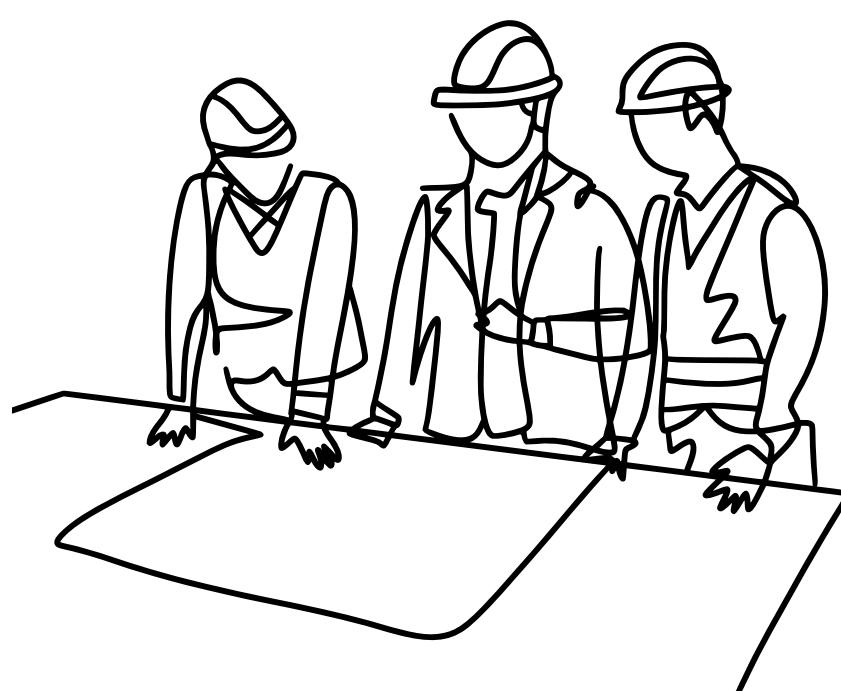
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## General Contractor

### Working With Your Permitting Jurisdiction

- As the general contractor, you're working with your county or other entity for permitting. Do your research prior to purchasing or having custom design plans created on what the expectations and requirements will be for your area.
- Requirements for permits vary greatly depending on your location, so while something might be allowed in one county that does not mean it will be allowed in the next county. States have vastly different requirements as well.
- It is not uncommon for jurisdictions with extensive permits/inspections to ask for revisions to design plans. This does not automatically mean that your drafting team failed to provide a good set of plans. This comes back to the fact that requirements vary depending on where you are building.
- If you're going back to a drafting or engineering team for plan revisions, make sure you have a letter from your jurisdiction stating what they are looking for so that nothing gets lost in translation.
- Once you submit your plan set and other required information, be prepared to give additional information, answer questions about the design, and more.

How comfortable am I with this part of being a GC?



# RESPONSIBILITIES OF A

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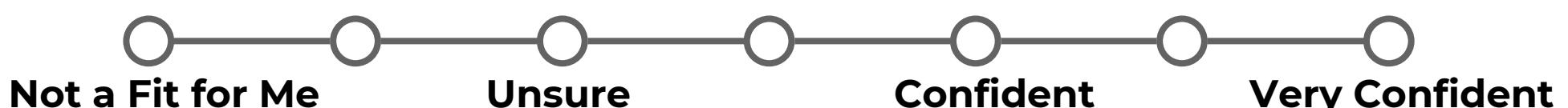
## General Contractor

### Availability

- You are probably trying to juggle this barndominium build with at least one decision maker working full time. Time management and a certain level of availability will be paramount.
- Pre-planning your project and walking through the details with your subcontractor will help a ton with having less spontaneous questions or need to visit the job site.
- Scheduling site visits during business hours is going to be the best option for sub-contractors. Carving out regular time during working hours to talk with them, answer their emails, and visit your site will help limit potential for frustration and mistakes.



How comfortable am I with this part of being a GC?



### Negotiation

- Your subcontractor is likely going to give you a bid for the job that is higher than what they would give to a pro who will provide consistent work. They are also assuming that since this isn't your full time job you'll be relying on them more than the pros normally need to.
- Depending on the area that you're building, there might be room to negotiate costs with your subcontractors. This will be more difficult if that trade has limited options to hire in your area. Be sure in your negotiations to understand what you're agreeing on so that a lower cost doesn't equal losing something that you really wanted in your build.

How comfortable am I with this part of being a GC?



# SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE GC

In addition to the construction coordination of your build there are other behind the scenes things that you need to be prepared to provide if you are the general contractor.

## Container(s) for trash and debris removal

- The easiest solution for this is to hire a dumpster service for the duration of your project. This way you don't have to worry about scraps and other materials blowing around your property.
- If you want scrap lumber to be piled up versus thrown away, communicate that with your subcontractors and show them a designated area to leave it.

## Sanitary Services

- Having sanitary/toilet services on site can save a lot of time and avoid having to leave in the middle of the day.
- These units can often be rented on a monthly basis and maintained by the rental company.

## Driveway and site clearing due to snow, etc.

- If you'll be building throughout the winter months know how you'll handle keeping your build site entrance clear.
- Communicate with your contractors if they're scheduled to be on site about when you'll have any snow removed or what they should expect when they arrive.

## Temporary Electric when available

- This is a conversation to have with your electrical provider and electrical contractor. If this option is available it is incredibly useful for you and your contractors to be able to power tools, charge batteries, and power lights during the build process.

# GENERAL TIPS

- Keep your jobsite free of non-building items. Subcontractors are probably accustomed to being able to freely work in the space without worrying about homeowner's items being in the way. If you choose to store items in your build you risk damage as well as additional charges if your contractors have to move them in order to work.
- Limit vacations and unavailability. It's not to say that you cannot enjoy your life while building your barndominium, but the timing of your vacations and other breaks shouldn't interfere with your contractors. If you are at a critical stage of the build you'll still need to be available as the general contractor.
- Have copies of permits, plans, and other information organized electronically and offer access to the contractors that need the information. Some contractors may also need printed copies of things, but you can discuss that on a case by case basis. It's usually required to have issued permits posted on the job site, so we recommend laminating a copy or using a clear plastic bag and tacking it up at the jobsite.
- If you're feeling creative and technically savvy, post QR codes around the site that take your contractor to a copy of your plans, specifications on things like cabinets, appliances, toilets, etc.

## Thoughts + Notes:



# CHOOSING + HIRING

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## A General Contractor

Perhaps all along or after reading through this information you've decided to hire a general contractor. This is a major decision and you should take time making sure you're hiring someone you feel confident in.

### **Here are some options you may find in your area:**

#### General Contractor

- This is someone who doesn't have a staff of the trades, but manages the project using subcontractors. They typically have a strong relationship with these subs making the process streamlined.

#### Post Frame, Steel Frame or Hybrid Builder/Contractor

- Builders who have crews that specialize in post, steel, or hybrid barndominium building may offer full or partial general contracting for your project.
- If the company is large enough they could have a broader range of services to assist you with choosing interior finishes and other design choices.

#### Stick Frame Builder/Contractor

- Some traditional building companies have opted to expand into the barndominium market. While they build with a conventional framing type, they may offer steel exterior cladding or other options that give your home a barndominium feel.

#### What will a General Contractor cost?

The answer to this question depends on your location. We have found that the number usually ranges from 10-25% of the total project. The amount will likely be influenced by the size of the company, the staff assisting with your build, and other negotiations with their subcontractors. A professional general contractor is usually giving their subcontractors consistent work which gives them the ability to negotiate lower rates than what you'd be able to hire that same contractor for.

#### What is Limited General Contracting?

In post and steel frame construction it's not uncommon to find a crew able to build your structure without being able to manage the project through the end. When this happens you may find yourself in a limited general contracting situation, where the builder will manage a portion and leave the rest to you or someone else that you hire.

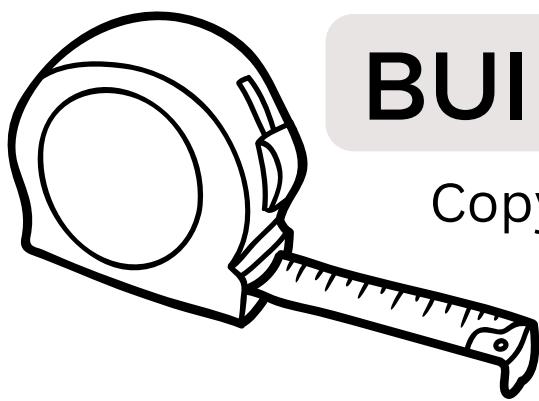
In these cases, a lot of clients have found that a stick frame builder can usually follow the structure builder and offer the remainder of the general contracting.



# DIY + SELF CONTRACTING

## BUILD ORDER OF EVENTS AND MY GC + DIY PLANS

	MAIN CONTRACTOR	SELF CONTRACT	DIY
<b>Site Prep</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Foundation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Structure</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Septic</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Plumbing</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Electric</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>HVAC</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>In Floor Heat</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Concrete</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Insulation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Interior Framing</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Drywall</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Paint</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Trim Carpentry</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Flooring</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## BUILDER/CONTRACTOR INFO

Copy this page as needed for additional contractor notes

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Email/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Construction Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Email/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Construction Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Email/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ADDITIONAL NOTES

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