

Chapter 06: Construction Timeline

From dirt to keys: what happens at each stage, how long it really takes, and where the process most often slips.

LEVEL 2 · UNDER CONTRACT · CHAPTER 06 OF 16

06. Construction Timeline

From dirt to keys: what happens at each stage, how long it really takes, and where the process most often slips.

The honest timeline

Builders quote optimistic schedules. A production home typically takes six to nine months from permit to closing; weather, inspections, labor, and materials can stretch any stage. Plan your lease, sale, and move around a range, not a date — and never schedule movers off a verbal estimate.

Stage by stage

Pre-construction (2–8 weeks): permits, final selections, and the pre-construction meeting where you confirm every structural choice. Errors are free to fix now and expensive later — bring your paperwork and check it line by line.

Foundation (2–4 weeks): forms, plumbing rough-in beneath the slab, and the pour. In Central Texas clay soils, ask what soil testing and foundation engineering was done for your specific lot.

Framing (3–6 weeks): the skeleton goes up fast and progress feels dramatic. Walk it if allowed — this is when you verify room dimensions and window placements match the plan.

Mechanicals and pre-drywall (3–5 weeks): plumbing, electrical, and HVAC are installed. The pre-drywall walkthrough is the single most important visit of the build: it's your only chance to see inside the walls. This is also the moment for a third-party pre-drywall inspection (Chapter 9).

Drywall through finishes (6–10 weeks): insulation, drywall, texture, paint, cabinets, counters, flooring, fixtures. Selections errors surface here — check installed items against your signed selection sheets while correction is still simple.

Final stretch (2–4 weeks): appliances, final grade and sod, punch-out work, the builder's quality inspection, your orientation walkthrough, and the blue-tape list. Then closing.

Where it slips

The most common delays: permit backlogs before ground ever breaks, weather during foundation and framing, and labor scheduling in the finish trades. A good builder communicates slips early. Radio silence followed by a suddenly moved closing date is a warning sign worth escalating politely and in writing.

Reporting note: Keep every selection sheet, change order, and email in one folder from day one. Nearly every construction dispute comes down to whose paperwork is better — make sure it's yours.