

Chapter 10: Understanding Warranties

The 1-2-10 structure, what's actually covered, what voids coverage, and how to file claims that get results.

LEVEL 2 · UNDER CONTRACT · CHAPTER 10 OF 16

10. Understanding Warranties

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The standard structure

Most production builders offer a tiered warranty, commonly '1-2-10': one year on workmanship and materials (the broadest coverage — finishes, fit, function), two years on major systems (plumbing, electrical, HVAC distribution), and ten years on major structural elements (typically load-bearing failure, narrowly defined). Read your specific documents — coverage definitions, not marketing labels, control everything.

What surprises people

Appliances aren't covered by the builder — they carry their own manufacturer warranties, which you must register separately. Cosmetic issues are generally only covered if documented at the blue-tape walkthrough. Concrete cracking within stated tolerances, normal settling, caulk shrinkage, and sod survival are usually excluded or time-limited. The ten-year 'structural' coverage is narrower than most buyers assume — it typically covers actual load-bearing failure, not every crack that appears.

What can void or limit coverage

Unpermitted modifications, improper drainage changes (regrading, new beds against the slab), owner-caused damage, and missed maintenance obligations. Warranty documents include a homeowner maintenance list — gutters, caulking, irrigation practices near foundations. In Central Texas clay soils, foundation-watering guidance appears in many warranties, and ignoring it can jeopardize the structural coverage that matters most.

Filing claims that work

Submit in writing, through the official portal or process — phone conversations with a superintendent are not claims. Document with photos and dates. Batch non-urgent items sensibly, but never sit on anything approaching the one-year workmanship deadline: file before the anniversary, because the postmark date matters, not the repair date. Chapter 9's eleven-month inspection exists precisely to feed this deadline.

Reporting note: Ask whether the warranty is administered by the builder directly or by a third-party warranty company — the claim experience differs meaningfully, and the answer belongs in your builder comparison before you buy, not after.