



## Change Order Orientation

Your home is a custom home and should be exactly as you want. And though you make every effort to plan correctly and to choose colors correctly, invariably it seems, you will want to change something. Be assured that at Patterson Homes we do change orders – and more importantly, we know how to do them and how to follow through so they are completed correctly!

However, even though we are willing and able, and even though the change order seems possible, you must understand that once started your new home is in progress. Realize that every sub-contractor and supplier doing work on your home has already been notified of your home's critical path. Plot plans, house plans, specifications and colors with your signatures authorizing such have been released and orders are being fulfilled. Therefore, any changes you do may cause significant delays, costs, ripple effects, and eventual buyer frustration.

Through the years, I have found that generally when I make a mistake (as perceived by the buyer) it is usually when a buyer that can't make up their mind – and so they do Change Orders. Sadly, more often than not I find buyers doing change orders on change orders ending up with their original color/design. Therefore, it is always best to evaluate the change as to if it is something you really want and are unsatisfied with. Think on it, but don't wait too long because the item you may be thinking of changing may be in the process of being built. Remember, just because the cabinets are not installed in your new home does not mean they are not already built waiting to be delivered and installed per your Critical Path date. And that can cause a lot of expense and buyer frustration when you now want to change.

**Many buyers cannot see the ripple affect of one small change order.** For example adding a simple desk cabinet requires adding a counter top, electrical, phone, TV, back splashes and usually upper cabinets, crown molding, and trim baseboards below. The finish carpenter must now come back to place the trim baseboards and the painter caulk and touch up the base and counters. Though the set of drawers added for a desk may only cost a few hundred dollars, the ripple affect may cost much more. Or, if a buyer chooses to change the home set back on their lot (say back an additional 10 or 20 feet), they may think there is only the extra drive concrete cost. However, the ripple effect would cause us to extend all the yard utilities lines and trenches (gas, power, water, sewer, etc), house walks, and perhaps delays of resubmitting the plot plans back to the city.

**As well, many buyers may not understand or see the delay “and costs”** involved in changing or adding things. For example, adding wood floors may add two to four weeks to the home construction timeline. The wood must acclimate in the home before installation and that may take a week or more. And then there is the installation, the coating and dry times between coats. And then there is the ripple effect of replacing the trim baseboards, painter touch up, and of moving the entire Critical Path on the home and expecting every sub scheduled to forego other jobs staying as planned to re-schedule to accommodate your desired change order. There is also the cost of the delay, overhead fees; extra utility fees that must be paid longer, extra rental fees of dumpsters and the like. As well, there are extra financing/interests fees, and superintendents and sales agent's time in servicing the change order when they would normally be on other jobs and perhaps finished with yours.

Even with this all said, **Change Orders are usually not a big deal** and can easily be done with proper notification and proper communication. At Patterson Homes, we pride ourselves in customer service and with our powerful internet portal we can immediately notify the buyer, each sub-contractor and each supplier of the pending Change Order and receive confirmation of such.

You should have been given a blank copy of a Change Order Form in the Pre-Construction Phase that explains the change order process. As well you can get additional forms and information off our web site at [www.phutah.com](http://www.phutah.com) –Article Library – Construction Phase II. Should you choose to do a Change Order, simply contact your Sales Representative as soon as possible, so that he/she can verify (with our staff, the superintendent, sub-contractor and sub/supplier) if the change can still be done, without huge cost ramifications. The costs it will involve will include any additional costs; ripple effects caused by the particular change, and any delays it may cause in the construction of your home's timeline.

**Remember, early notification is the key to avoiding many of the frustrations and costly mistakes that come with Change Orders.** With the costs in hand you can then make a clear decision about doing a Change Order and getting the home exactly the way you want. That's our goal too!

James Patterson - President, Patterson Construction