



LOG AND TIMBER HOME CONSTRUCTION

An Interview with Mike Nenahlo, In-House General Contractor at Wisconsin Log Homes.



Please explain the basic construction process of a Wisconsin Log Home.

After finalizing your plans and meeting with myself or your project manager to pick out finishes for your home, the construction process will soon begin. We usually start with rough staking of the lot to verify the placement and setbacks. At this time, we can be sure the home is properly positioned to take advantage of certain views as the home was designed for. Your site will now need to be prepared for construction. The lot may need to be cleared of any hindering trees and a construction entrance/driveway will most likely need to be implemented. Once building permits are in hand, we will start excavation, giving you the opportunity to see the shape your home will soon start taking. Depending on your property, blasting of rock or additional engineering may be required.

Next, the footings are installed and the foundation is poured. Rough framing will soon begin. It is important to make sure that all framing is set up for log application with reinforced areas as needed. During the framing process, mechanicals, HVAC, plumbing, fireplace chase(s), and electrical will all be roughed-in. Your home will soon be insulated with a roof, windows and doors - making the house enclosed and "weather-tight." At this point, when applicable, any additional amenities such as sound, security, and video surveillance systems, or theaters, wine rooms, pool/hot tub rooms, elevators, etc will be prepped.



As the process continues, exterior logs, stone and other building materials will be installed. If applicable, your radiant flooring and/or Geo Thermal System will be prepped and installed, along with any other solar or alternative energy options. At this time, your well and septic and/or sewer and water will be connected, along with gas and electric. Once the exterior is complete, interior log and other interior finishes, like plaster and paint, will start. Flooring, cabinets and built-ins will be installed at this time, and completion for all other amenities progress. Once flooring is complete and all log or timber work is done, the final plumbing and electrical work is finalized. All appliances are installed.

Your project will be inspected by a licensed state building inspector during various phases of the project, most likely (depending on your state) after footing and foundation work, framing and roofing, electrical, plumbing and HVAC, and insulation. Some areas may inspect more or less often, depending on state and local codes.

This process normally takes between 3 and 12 months, depending on your home's size, complexity and finishes. Homes over 10,000 square feet typically take longer than 12 months to complete.

What is the General Contractor's responsibility when it comes to the materials package delivery?

Your General Contractor will set up delivery dates with Wisconsin Log Homes for materials as needed. Deliveries are scheduled as the materials are necessary during various stages of construction. Once materials arrive at the job site, all items should be checked over to verify quantities and any materials that may have been damaged during unloading. The General Contractor should have a sky track on site to unload materials and they should also make sure enough space is dedicated for materials to be dropped off.

What do clients need to be careful of?

Folks need to be careful of being the General Contractor of their own project. I completely recommend this if the homeowner is experienced and knowledgeable when it comes to log and timber home construction, but I've seen inexperienced homeowners get themselves into a great deal of trouble with subcontractors taking advantage of them and doing numerous change orders after they get the job.

What is one area that folks overlook the most?

So many people overlook the importance of finding a qualified builder for their log or timber home and settle for the lowest price instead. Some clients choose to get as many bids as possible, without comparing each company fairly or knowing what to look for. For this reason, Wisconsin Log Homes has its own Project Manager and National Builder Network which consists of qualified builders throughout the world who we work closely with and trust to build our homes. It's so important to find a builder who will build your home with the highest quality and attention to detail. Find a contractor with years of experience and knowledge, along with someone who is dedicated, organized and passionate about your project. Get referrals from past clients. Finding the right builder will not only make for a great experience during the construction process, but it will also result in a home that's built as well as it was designed. These unique homes are works of art and should be built by experienced builders who appreciate the amount of detail that goes into them.



Do you have any advice to make this process a more smooth one?

Find a company who is linked to a proven General Contractor who will make your life easy and keep you and your project organized. As the in-house General Contractor at Wisconsin Log Homes, I make it a priority to let my clients know far in advance when decisions need to be made on finishing options. This gives them plenty of time to research and decide and saves them frustration. It also keeps the construction process moving smoothly. With that being said, Wisconsin Log Homes has an in-house interior designer who works with our clients from preliminary planning through construction assisting with exterior and interior finish selections. There are so many options available when building a hybrid log or timber home, so we do everything possible to make this process simple for our clients.

It's also important to have a General Contractor who will keep you updated with your project. Some clients are building a house in a different state than where they live, so it's my job to make sure they know exactly what is happening with their project each week. The building process can be overwhelming if you don't have the right people guiding you through it.

