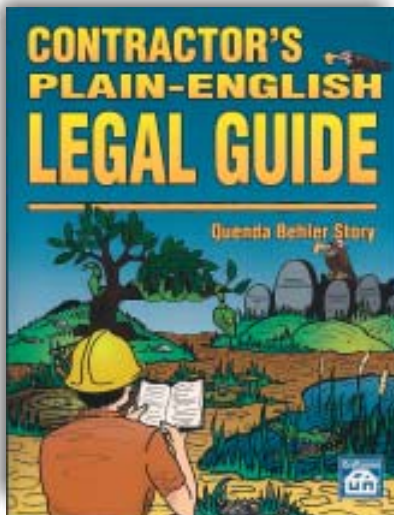


Resources

Bridge Over Troubled Waters

by Dave Holbrook

If you're just getting started in the building business and have the good sense to read Quenda Behler Story's *Contractor's Plain-English Legal Guide* (Craftsman Book Company, 2002; 800/829-8123, www.craftsman-book.com; \$49.50), you'll have received one of your first and best warnings that you're facing a rough road ahead. And that's the good



news. Let's face it, if you're risk-averse, you might be happier in another line of work. There are scheming clients out there just waiting to play their own, litigation-driven version of Chicken. One of the worst scenarios for a builder is to wind up in court, battling for his or her paycheck, reputation, or survival.

The author has a knack for imparting clarity to the legal realities confronting building professionals. Her guide covers the bases from business startup to full steam ahead and on to retirement without lapsing into Latinese. When you do encounter the occasional *quantum meruit* or *caveat emptor*, it's in the context of a clear translation. Does she cover *all* the bases? Well... is there a limit to human mischief, folly, and inventiveness?

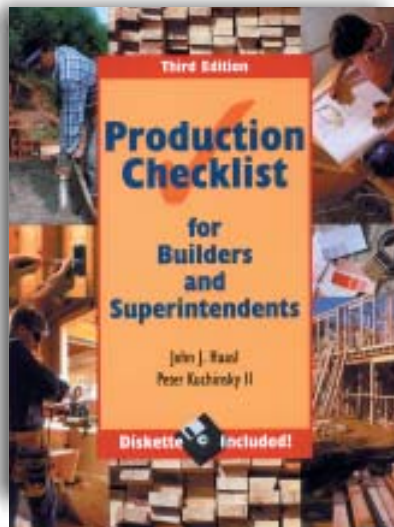
Nevertheless, as stated in the guide's introduction, you can certainly save yourself a few \$300-per-hour legal bills over the long haul by taking heed of the advice offered.

Adding to the utility of the book is a CD full of legal form blanks, contracts, waivers, and notices in Adobe PDF and Rich Text (RTF) formats.

If you're already in a fix, the *Legal Guide* may or may not get you all the way over those troubled waters. But, until you're forced to hook up with your own flesh-and-blood attorney, don't let this reliable counselor gather dust on your bookshelf.

The Six Ps

Building projects take on a life of their own. And, like it or not, they take a hefty piece of your life, too. "Building houses is not a 9-to-5 or a Monday-through-Friday job," state John J. Haasl and Peter Kuchinsky II, authors of *Production Checklist for Builders and Superintendents* (Home Builder Press, 2001; 800/223-2665, www.builderbooks.com; \$37). The authors stake their faith and base their book on what they call "the Six Ps: Prior Proper Planning Prevents



FREE & CHEAP

Got Mold?

Not with the right information on hand. Download the 46-page *Mold: Cause, Effect, and Response*, in Adobe PDF format, an account of this fast-blooming threat to health and welfare. Written for the construction industry, the document provides thorough guidance, from identification to containment, and prevention to risk management. Free online at www.awci.org/mold-series-1.pdf.

The Chelsea Group

Itasca, Ill.

800/626-6722

www.chelsea-grp.com

Roof Ventilation

A free, 7-minute promotional video from Air Vent contrasts its product with the competition and makes a persuasive case for a baffled ridge vent.

Air Vent

Dallas, Texas

800/247-8368

www.airvent.com

Vinyl Bead

A somewhat useful, 19-minute *Art of Drywall Bead Installation* video presents products, techniques, and the decorative versatility of various rigid vinyl bead profiles, but the info is swaddled in a contrived motorcycle drag-racing theme and a cheesy, tedious sport-short soundtrack guaranteed to annoy. Good product, bad production. What do you want for nothing?

Trim-Tex

Lincolnwood, Ill.

800/874-2333

www.trim-tex.com

Resources

Poor Performance." To keep errors and omissions from mounting an attack on your construction schedule, they say, you need some kind of detailed road map to follow and maybe a log of where you've been.

Not a narrative, this is a book of lists: 137 pages of detailed items to check off along the path of the building project, from prejob planning to the final payment. Developed from 50 years of combined experience in home building and construction, the lists seem exhaustive, although that's probably not possible given the unique nature of most homes and every client. However, this is far better than starting your own lists from scratch. And you can always paste in special items as the need arises, especially given the included floppy diskette containing all the checklists in MS-Word format (sorry, Mac users — IBM compatibles only). In fact, if nothing more, the book is a complete, annotated reference to the diskette's contents.

Appendixes "A" and "B" contain, respectively, a Typical Construction Schedule and a detailed item list of Sample Pay Schedule Ratios, or draws on the contract.

Applied by the supervisor in the field, these checklists could provide a dynamic record of where you are, where you're going, and where you've been, information that can otherwise get lost or confused in the heat of the battle. If you hate paperwork, just remember how much more you hate screwing up. Again. 

FREE & CHEAP

Accessible Directory

Trying to make your homes more user friendly? The NAHB Research Center offers the *2002 Directory of Accessible Building Products* to members and non-members alike for \$5.00.

NAHB Research Center
Upper Marlboro, Md.
800/638-8556
www.nahbrc.org.

Wood on the Web

Explore your staining options on 21 species of hardwood in virtual reality using the free *Finishing Touch* CD, available online from the Hardwood Council. And go to www.hardwoodcouncil.com to download several online brochures detailing hardwood flooring installation over concrete slabs, radiant heating, and hardwoods in the bathroom. Additional tips cover decorative techniques and mixing tile, brass, and other accents in a hardwood floor.

The Hardwood Council
Oakmont, Pa.
412/281-4980
www.hardwoodcouncil.com

Fireplace Design Guide

Smoking out clients should be the goal of your marketing program, but only before you build. The *Best Practices for Woodburning Fireplace Installation* guide is designed to prevent faulty design and construction that leads to backdrafting. Free online, or obtain a printed version via snail mail.

Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association
Arlington, Va.
703/522-0086
www.hpba.org.