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IOM International Organization for Migration  
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations  
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

## **CONSTRUCTION GLOSSARY**

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WORD	DEFINITION	WORD (NATIONAL LANGUAGE)	DEFINITION (NATIONAL LANGUAGE)
A/C	An abbreviation for air conditioner or air conditioning		
Aggregate	A mixture of sand and stone and a major component of concrete		
Air space	The area between insulation facing and interior of exterior wall coverings..		
Allowance(s)	A sum of money set aside in the construction contract for items which have not been selected and specified in the construction contract. For example, selection of tile as a flooring may require an allowance for an underlayment material, or an electrical allowance which sets aside an amount of money to be spent on electrical fixtures.		
Amortization	A payment plan by which a loan is reduced through monthly payments of principal and interest		
Anchor bolts	Bolts to secure a wooden sill plate to concrete , or masonry floor or wall		
Appraisal	An expert valuation of property		
Apron	A trim board that is installed beneath a window sill		
Area wells	Corrugated metal or concrete barrier walls installed around a basement window to hold back the earth		
Astragal	A molding, attached to one of a pair of swinging double doors, against which the other door strikes.		
Attic access	An opening that is placed in the drywalled ceiling of a home providing access to the attic		
Backing	Frame lumber installed between the wall studs to give additional support for drywall or an interior trim related item, such as handrail brackets, cabinets, and towel bars. In this way, items are screwed and mounted into solid wood rather than weak drywall that may allow the item to break loose from the wall. <b>Carpet backing</b> holds the pile fabric in		

	place.		
Ballast	A transformer that steps up the voltage in a florescent lamp		
Balusters	Vertical members in a railing used between a top rail and bottom rail or the stair treads. Sometimes referred to as 'pickets' or 'spindles'		
Balustrade	The rail, posts and vertical balusters along the edge of a stairway or elevated walkway		
Barge	Horizontal beam rafter that supports shorter rafters		
Base or baseboard	A trim board placed against the wall around the room next to the floor		
Basement window inserts	The window frame and glass unit that is installed in the window buck		
Base shoe	Molding used next to the floor on interior base board. Sometimes called a carpet strip		
Bat	A half-brick		
Batten	Narrow strips of wood used to cover joints or as decorative vertical members over plywood or wide boards		
Bay window	Any window space projecting outward from the walls of a building, either square or polygonal in plan		
Beam	A structural member transversely supporting a load. A structural member carrying building loads (weight) from one support to another. Sometimes called a "girder".		
Bearing partition	A partition that supports any vertical load in addition to its own weight		
Bearing point	A point where a bearing or structural weight is concentrated and transferred to the foundation		
Bearing wall	A wall that supports any vertical load in addition to its own weight		
Bearing header	(a) A beam placed perpendicular to joists and to which joists are nailed in framing for a chimney, stairway, or other opening. (b) A wood lintel. (c) The horizontal structural member over an opening (for example over a door or window).		
Bedrock	A subsurface layer of earth that is suitable to support a structure		

Bifold door	Doors that are hinged in the middle for opening in a smaller area than standard swing doors. Often used for closet doors		
Binder	A receipt for a deposit to secure the right to purchase a home at an agreed terms by a buyer and seller		
Bypass doors.	Doors that slide by each other and commonly used as closet doors		
Blocked (door blocking)	Wood shims used between the door frame and the vertical structural wall framing members.		
Blocking	Small wood pieces to brace framing members or to provide a nailing base for gypsum board or paneling.		
Block out	To install a box or barrier within a foundation wall to prevent the concrete from entering an area. For example, foundation walls are sometimes "blocked" in order for mechanical pipes to pass through the wall, to install a crawl space door, and to depress the concrete at a garage door location.		
Blow insulation	Fiber insulation in loose form and used to insulate attics and existing walls where framing members are not exposed		
Blue print(s)	A type of copying method often used for architectural drawings. Usually used to describe the drawing of a structure which is prepared by an architect or designer for the purpose of design and planning, estimating, securing permits and actual construction.		
Boom	A truck used to hoist heavy material up and into place. To put trusses on a home or to set a heavy beam into place		
Bottom chord	The lower or bottom horizontal member of a truss		
Brace	An inclined piece of framing lumber applied to wall or floor to strengthen the structure. Often used on walls as temporary bracing until framing has been completed		
Brick ledge	Part of the foundation wall where brick (veneer) will rest.		

Brick lintel	The metal angle iron that brick rests on, especially above a window, door, or other opening.		
Brick mold	Trim used around an exterior door jamb that siding butts to		
Brick veneer	A vertical facing of brick laid against and fastened to sheathing of a framed wall or tile wall construction.		
Bridging	Small wood or metal members that are inserted in a diagonal position between the floor joists or rafters at mid-span for the purpose of bracing the joists/rafters & spreading the load.		
Built-up roof	A roofing composed of three to five layers of asphalt felt laminated with coal tar, pitch, or asphalt. The top is finished with crushed slag or gravel. Generally used on flat or low-pitched roofs.		
Bundle	A package of shingles..		
Butt edge	The lower edge of the shingle tabs.		
Butt hinge	The most common type. One leaf attaches to the door's edge, the other to its jamb.		
Butt joint	The junction where the ends of two timbers meet, and also where sheets of drywall meet on the 4 foot edge. To place materials end-to-end or end-to-edge without overlapping		
By fold door	Doors that are hinged in the middle for opening in a smaller area than standard swing doors. Often used for closet doors.		
By pass doors	Doors that slide by each other and commonly used as closet doors		
Cap	The upper member of a column, pilaster, door cornice, molding, or fireplace.		
Cap flashing	The portion of the flashing attached to a vertical surface to prevent water from migrating behind the base flashing		
Ceramic tile	A man-made or machine-made		

	clay tile used to finish a floor or wall. Generally used in bathtub and shower enclosures and on counter tops.		
Chase	A framed enclosed space around a flue pipe or a channel in a wall, or through a ceiling for something to lie in or pass through		
Chink	To install fiberglass insulation around all exterior door and window frames, wall corners, and small gaps in the exterior wall.		
Circuit	The path of electrical flow from a power source through an outlet and back to ground.		
Clean out	An opening providing access to a drain line. Closed with a threaded plug.		
Column	A vertical structural compression member which supports loads		
Compressor	- A mechanical device that pressurizes a gas in order to turn it into a liquid, thereby allowing heat to be removed or added. A compressor is the main component of conventional heat pumps and air conditioners. In an air conditioning system, the compressor normally sits outside and has a large fan (to remove heat).		
Concrete	The mixture of Portland cement, sand, gravel, and water. Used to make garage and basement floors, sidewalks, patios, foundation walls, etc. It is commonly reinforced with steel rods (rebar) or wire screening (mesh).		
Conduction	The direct transfer of heat energy through a material		
Construction, frame	A type of construction in which the structural components are wood or depend upon a wood frame for support		
Deck, decked	To install the plywood or wafer board sheathing on the floor joists, rafters, or trusses.		
Dedicated circuit	An electrical circuit that serves only one appliance (ie, dishwasher) or a series of electric heaters or smoke detectors.		
Double hung window	A window with two vertically sliding sashes, both of which can move up and down.		

Drain tile	A perforated, corrugated plastic pipe laid at the bottom of the foundation wall and used to drain excess water away from the foundation. It prevents ground water from seeping through the foundation wall. Sometimes called perimeter drain.		
Earthquake Strap	A metal strap used to secure gas hot water heaters to the framing or foundation of a house. Intended to reduce the chances of having the water heater fall over in an earthquake and causing a gas leak		
Egress	A means of exiting the home. An egress window is required in every bedroom and basement.		
Electric lateral	The trench or area in the yard where the electric service line (from a transformer or pedestal) is located, or the work of installing the electric service to a home.		
Elevation sheet	The page on the blue prints that depicts the house or room as if a vertical plane were passed through the structure.		
Face nail	To install nails into the vertical face of a bearing header or beam		
Facing brick	The brick used and exposed on the outside of a wall. Usually these have a finished texture.		
Field measure	To take measurements (cabinets, countertops, stairs, shower doors, etc.) in the home itself instead of using the blueprints		
Fire brick	Brick made of refractory ceramic material which will resist high temperatures. Used in a fireplace and boiler.		
Fish tape	A long strip of spring steel used for fishing cables and for pulling wires through conduit.		
Flashing	Sheet metal or other material used in roof and wall construction to protect a building from water seepage		
Flatwork	Common word for concrete floors, driveways, basements, and sidewalks.		
Floating	The next-to-last stage in concrete work, when you smooth off the job and bring water to the surface by using a hand float or bull float.		

Foundation	The supporting portion of a structure below the first floor construction, or below grade, including the footings.		
Foundation waterproofing	High-quality below-grade moisture protection. Used for below-grade exterior concrete and masonry wall damp-proofing to seal out moisture and prevent corrosion.		
Framer	The carpenter contractor that installs the lumber and erects the frame, flooring system, interior walls, backing, trusses, rafters, decking, installs all beams, stairs, soffits and all work related to the wood structure of the home. The framer builds the home according to the blueprints and must comply with local building codes and regulations.		
Framing	Lumber used for the structural members of a building, such as studs, joists, and rafters		
Fuse	A device often found in older homes designed to prevent overloads in electrical lines. This protects against fire.		
Glazing	The process of installing glass, which commonly is secured with glazier's points and glazing compound.		
Gloss enamel	A finishing paint material. Forms a hard coating with maximum smoothness of surface and dries to a sheen or luster (gloss)		
Grain	The direction, size, arrangement, appearance, or quality of the fibers in wood.		
Grout	A wet mixture of cement, sand and water that flows into masonry or ceramic crevices to seal the cracks between the different pieces. Mortar made of such consistency (by adding water) that it will flow into the joints and cavities of the masonry work and fill them solid.		
Gypsum plaster	Gypsum formulated to be used with the addition of sand and water for base-coat plaster		
Hardware	All of the "metal" fittings that go into the home when it is near completion. For example, door knobs, towel bars, handrail brackets, closet rods, house		



	numbers, door closers, etc. The Interior Trim Carpenter installs the "hardware"		
Highlights	A light spot, area, or streak on a painted surface.		
Insulating glass	Window or door in which two panes of glass are used with a sealed air space between. Also known as <b>Double glass</b> .		
Insulation	Any material high in resistance to heat transmission that, when placed in the walls, ceiling, or floors of a structure, and will reduce the rate of heat flow.		
Irrigation	Lawn sprinkler system.		
Jack post	A type of structural support made of metal, which can be raised or lowered through a series of pins and a screw to meet the height required. Basically used as a replacement for an old supporting member in a building		
Joint-	The location between the touching surfaces of two members or components joined and held together by nails, glue, cement, mortar, or other means.		
Keeper	The metal latch plate in a door frame into which a doorknob plunger latches.		
Keyway	A slot formed and poured on a footer or in a foundation wall when another wall will be installed at the slot location. This gives additional strength to the joint/meeting point.		
Knot	In lumber, the portion of a branch or limb of a tree that appears on the edge or face of the piece		
Laminated shingles	Shingles that have added dimensionality because of extra layers or tabs, giving a shake-like appearance. May also be called "architectural shingles" or "three-dimensional shingles."		
Laminating	Bonding together two or more layers of materials.		
Lap	To cover the surface of one shingle or roll with another		
Load bearing wall	Includes all exterior walls and any interior wall that is aligned above a support beam or girder. Normally, any wall that has a		

	double horizontal top plate		
Manufactured wood	A wood product such as a truss, beam, gluelam, microlam or joist which is manufactured out of smaller wood pieces and glued or mechanically fastened to form a larger piece. Often used to create a stronger member which may use less wood		
Masonry	Stone, brick, concrete, hollow-tile, concrete block, or other similar building units or materials. Normally bonded together with mortar to form a wall		
Mastic	A pasty material used as a cement (as for setting tile) or a protective coating (as for thermal insulation or waterproofing)		
Mortar	A mixture of cement (or lime) with sand and water used in masonry work.		
Mudsill	Bottom horizontal member of an exterior wall frame which rests on top a foundation, sometimes called sill plate. Also sole plate, bottom member of interior wall frame.		
Muriatic acid	Commonly used as a brick cleaner after masonry work is completed		
Natural finish	A transparent finish which does not seriously alter the original color or grain of the natural wood. Natural finishes are usually provided by sealers, oils, varnishes, water repellent preservatives, and other similar materials		
Nonbearing wall	A wall supporting no load other than its own weight.		
Open hole inspection	When an engineer (or municipal inspector) inspects the open excavation and examines the earth to determine the type of foundation (caisson, footer, wall on ground, etc.) that should be installed in the hole.		
Padding	A material installed under carpet to add foot comfort, isolate sound, and to prolong carpet life.		
Panel	A thin flat piece of wood, plywood, or similar material, framed by stiles and rails as in a door (or cabinet door), or fitted into grooves of thicker material		

	with molded edges for decorative wall treatment		
Partition	A wall that subdivides spaces within any story of a building or room.		
Paver, paving	Materials—commonly masonry—laid down to make a firm, even surface		
Permeability	A measure of the ease with which water penetrates a material.		
Permit	A governmental municipal authorization to perform a building process		
Pier	A column of masonry, usually rectangular in horizontal cross section, used to support other structural members		
Pigment	A powdered solid used in paint or enamel to give it a color		
Plough, plow	To cut a lengthwise groove in a board or plank		
Plumbing ground	The plumbing drain and waste lines that are installed beneath a basement floor		
Rebar, reinforcing bar	Ribbed steel bars installed in foundation concrete walls, footers, and poured in place concrete structures designed to strengthen concrete. Comes in various thickness' and strength grade.		
Reducer	A fitting with different size openings at either end and used to go from a larger to a smaller pipe.		
Reglaze	To replace a broken window.		
Retaining wall	A structure that holds back a slope and prevents erosion		
Road base	A aggregate mixture of sand and stone.		
Roof jack	Sleeves that fit around the black plumbing waste vent pipes at, and are nailed to, the roof sheathing.		
Roof sheathing or sheathing	The wood panels or sheet material fastened to the roof rafters or trusses on which the shingle or other roof covering is laid.		
Sanitary sewer	A sewer system designed for the collection of waste water from the bathroom, kitchen and laundry		

	drains, and is usually not designed to handle storm water.		
Schedule (window, door, mirror)	A table on the blueprints that list the sizes, quantities and locations of the windows, doors and mirrors.		
Screed, plaster	A small strip of wood, usually the thickness of the plaster coat, used as a guide for plastering.		
Scribing	Cutting and fitting woodwork to an irregular surface.		
Sealer	A finishing material, either clear or pigmented, that is usually applied directly over raw wood for the purpose of sealing the wood surface.		
Self-sealing shingles	Shingles containing factory-applied strips or spots of self-sealing adhesive.		
Semigloss paint or enamel	A paint or enamel made so that its coating, when dry, has some luster but is not very glossy. Bathrooms and kitchens are normally painted semi-gloss		
Septic system	An on site waste water treatment system. It usually has a septic tank which promotes the biological digestion of the waste, and a drain field which is designed to let the left over liquid soak into the ground. Septic systems and permits are usually sized by the number of bedrooms in a house.		
Service entrance panel	Main power cabinet where electricity enters a home wiring system		
Service equipment	Main control gear at the service entrance, such as circuit breakers, switches, and fuses.		
Sewer tap	The physical connection point where the home's sewer line connects to the main municipal sewer line.		
Sheet metal work	All components of a house employing sheet metal, such as flashing, gutters, and downspouts.		
Shingles	Roof covering of asphalt, asbestos, wood, tile, slate, or other material cut to stock lengths, widths, and thickness'.		
Shutter	Usually lightweight louvered decorative frames in the form of doors located on the sides of a window. Some shutters are made		

	to close over the window for protection.		
Sound attenuation	Sound proofing a wall or subfloor, generally with fiberglass insulation.		
Stick built	A house built without prefabricated parts. Also called conventional building.		
Stub, stubbed-	To push through		
Suspended ceiling	A ceiling system supported by hanging it from the overhead structural framing		
Switch	A device that completes or disconnects an electrical circuit		
Take off	The material necessary to complete a job		
Taping	The process of covering drywall joints with paper tape and joint compound		
Terra cotta	A ceramic material molded into masonry units		
Thermostat	A device which regulates the temperature of a room or building by switching heating or cooling equipment on or off.		
Threshold	The bottom metal or wood plate of an exterior door frame. Generally they are adjustable to keep a tight fit with the door sla.		
Trim (plumbing, heating, electrical)	The work that the "mechanical" contractors perform to finish their respective aspects of work, and when the home is nearing completion and occupancy		
Truss	An engineered and manufactured roof support member with "zig-zag" framing members. Does the same job as a rafter but is designed to have a longer span than a rafter.		
Turpentine	A petroleum, volatile oil used as a thinner in paints and as a solvent in varnishes		
Undercoat	A coating applied prior to the finishing or top coats of a paint job. It may be the first of two or the second of three coats. Sometimes called the Prime coat		

Underground plumbing	The plumbing drain and waste lines that are installed beneath a basement floor.		
Utility easement	The area of the earth that has electric, gas, or telephone lines. These areas may be owned by the homeowner, but the utility company has the legal right to enter the area as necessary to repair or service the lines		
Veneer	Extremely thin sheets of wood. Also a thin slice of wood or brick or stone covering a framed wall		
Voltage	A measure of electrical potential		
Warping	Any distortion in a material		
Waste pipe and vent	Plumbing plastic pipe that carries waste water to the municipal sewage system.		
Water-repellent preservative	A liquid applied to wood to give the wood water repellent properties		
Water closet	Another name for toilet		
Window frame	The stationary part of a window unit; window sash fits into the window frame		
Zoning	A governmental process and specification which limits the use of a property e.g. single family use, high rise residential use, industrial use, etc. Zoning laws may limit where you can locate a structure.		

This glossary was based on parts of the Construction Glossary available at:  
<http://www.homebuildingmanual.com/Glossary.htm>