



Cogdill Builders of Florida

We Draw Your Plans & Build Your Home

How to design your custom dream home

As one of the few home builders that can draw plans for my clients' custom homes, I have put together this series of *How-To Guides* to design your custom dream home; or simply the home you want. Keep in mind, I am a Custom Home Builder in Tampa, Florida, so some concepts presented may be specific to this area.

To help you and my future customers I have put together this series of steps to assist you in designing your custom dream home. The goal of this guide is to assist you in collecting your thoughts and ideas for your home in one place. During this whole process, the most important thing to remember is: BE FLEXIBLE AND HAVE FUN!

Home Design Questionnaire:

1. How Many Floors: (notes) _____ floors

One story, two story, three story, or more. You should first think about how many stories you want for your custom dream home.

Here are a few considerations for anyone considering 2 stories or more:

- Do you want to climb stairs?
- If yes, will you want to climb those stairs in 5-10 years?
- Is it a problem for you to continuously carry laundry and other items up and down the stairs?
- Do you want the master upstairs or downstairs? A downstairs master is the most popular 2 story option nowadays because of the above questions.
- Do you want the children's/guest bedrooms upstairs or downstairs?

2. The Overall Design Concept

There are a series of questions that should be answered to determine the flow, style, and overall concept of your dream home. These are basic lifestyle questions that can reflect your way of life, family size, and overall preferences for your custom dream home. There are no right or wrong answers.

Many houses fall into the following basic styles:

Open floor plan: An open floor plan gives you more space throughout your home, but you won't have much privacy (Space VS privacy).

Bungalow house plan: Bungalow homes include one and half stories with a low-pitched roof and most living space on the first floor. They position the living room in the center of the floor plan, making them truly family friendly.

Split bedroom plan: A split bedroom plan places the master bedroom on a different floor from the other bedrooms, or if it is a 1 story home it is remote from the other bedrooms. This is great if you want additional privacy.

Some of these questions include:

- Is privacy within your home a top priority?
- Do you prefer open spaces/do you want to maximize your space?
- How many floors?
- What room do you spend the most time in? (Living room, kitchen, basement, bedroom, etc)
- Are you looking to downsize or is your family growing?

What are your overall design concept ideas?

3. Room Count

Downsizing is very common nowadays. All plans start with a room count: Make a list of the rooms and remember, more rooms = more square feet = more cost:

____ Garage and size _____ (# of cars)

____ Lanai/Patio/other Exterior areas

____ # of bedrooms

____ # of bathrooms

___ Kitchen

___ List of Kitchen Appliances

___ Dining Room

___ Great Room

___ Separate Den or Living Room

4. General Design Notes (Cheat Sheet)

Knowing common measurements in a home can be an important factor in how you design your custom dream home. Below is a collection of common features that you might include in your new home, and their measurements.

- **Cabinets:**

- **Ready to Assemble Cabinets** vary in length in 3" increments (15", 18", 21", 24, etc.), and vary in width and height. Custom Cabinets are made to any dimensions.
- **Base (bottom) cabinets** are a standard 36" high (including 1-1/2" of countertop) x 25" deep (24" deep cabinet plus 1" of countertop), with or without a 4" backsplash.

- **Wall cabinets** are a standard 30" high x 12" deep. Taller versions are 42" high x 12" deep and the top of 42" tall cabinets are 8' above the finished floor. Wall cabinets typically are installed with bottom of wall cabinet 18" from countertop below OR in other words; bottom of wall cabinet 54" above finish floor (AFF)

- **Appliances:**

- **Refrigerators** are a standard 36" wide with a 15" high wall cabinet above or 27" high for 42" upper cabinets. We allow a 38" wide space in cabinets or refrigerators unless you have a special-order refrigerator such as Subzero brand for gourmet kitchens.
- **Ranges** are manufactured in a 30" standard width. We install a 15" high wall cabinet above a range hood (27" high for tall cabinets) with range hood or a microwave/range hood combination.
- **Dishwashers** are manufactured with a standard 24" width, adding a 3" edge piece of cabinet if the dishwasher is in the corner. The dishwasher is 34 ½" high. Adding 1½" of countertop brings the dishwasher space to 36" above the finished floor. Consider putting the dishwasher in close proximity to the sink.
- **Trash compactors** are 15" wide, the same height as your dishwasher.
- **Sinks** are manufactured in a standard 32" width and require a base cabinet of 33" or 36".
- **Bar tops** may be set at 30" (table height), 36" (counter height) or 42" (high bar height for that south Florida tiki bar feeling). Bar tops are 12" wide for most homes and 16" or 18" wide for higher end custom homes.
- **Pantries** in our homes are usually a 5'x5' walk-in and 6" shelf width.

Kitchen notes:

List of Appliances:

- **Dining Room**

Our *minimum* dining room size is 11' x 11', or 12' x 14' in more upscale homes. The size depends on your family size and whether you want to entertain a lot. Other considerations include whether you want crown molding or a tray ceiling.

Dining Room Notes:

- **Breakfast Area:**

The breakfast areas in our custom homes are a *minimum* of 8' x 8' center to center (CC), giving you a clear 7'-6" x 7'-6" of area for table and seating. Some considerations for a breakfast area is that bigger is often better and if you already have a large enough kitchen island is a breakfast area necessary?

Breakfast Area Notes:

- **Family rooms/great rooms:**

18' x 22' is usually a comfortable size for a family room or great room. The size of this can greatly vary depending on your lifestyle, size of your family, and if you plan on entertaining in it.

Family Room Notes:

· **Specialty Rooms:**

Since we are custom home builders, we understand your home might require some special rooms. What sort of rooms are you interested in having to suit your lifestyle?

_____ Crafts or Exercise Room

_____ Home Office

_____ Den or Man/Woman Cave

_____ Wine Cellar

_____ Playroom

_____ Library

Specialty Rooms Notes:

· **Bedrooms:**

Your bedroom will be the place you spend a lot of your time. The size and shape of your bedrooms will change depending on your needs, however, here are common measurements of our bedrooms:

- For a mid-range house, a standard bedroom is a minimum of 11'x12' with a 2'-6" door minimum (use 2'-8" width door for handicap access in the future).
- Master bedrooms are no less than 12', 13' x 15' on average with a 2'-6" door minimum, or 2'-8" for handicap access.
- Bedroom windows use 3050 SH window for ingress/egress.

Bedroom Notes:

· **Bathrooms:**

Make your bathroom a place for you to unwind, relax, and enjoy. Below are some considerations of things you should include in your custom bathroom and common measurements:

- Vanity Cabinets are 31" high and 21" deep, with a 22" deep countertop.
- Toilet area is a minimum of 2'-6" minimum plan view for toilet area 2'-6" in clear, use 3'-0" in clear
- Bathtubs are usually 2'-6" (30" wide) x 5'-0" (60") with a rough opening of 5'-1/2" x 33" in the clear.
 - Standard garden tub size is 42" deep x 60" long or 42" deep x 72" long, add 1/2" to length for rough opening size
 - Corner garden tub 60" or 72" on each side add 1/2" to rough opening
 - Tub enclosure 59" above lip of tub
- Showers have a minimum area required by code of 1040 square inches. They must be 30" in the clear, and 36" x 36" is the minimum size, 36" x 48" is the best size.
 - The enclosure is a 69" high standard, increase to 75" high if no shower pan (sunken into slab – ground floor).
 - The shower door width standard is 24" – rough opening – 24-1/2" wide.
 - Handicap Showers: must have a recessed floor with a ramp from the regular floor level to shower floor at 1' per foot slope.

· **Other Interior Room Considerations**

- **Closets:**
 - HVAC closets: DEPTH: 32" clear min, 3' cc and WIDTH: 48" clear min, 4'-4" cc
 - Clothes closets: 2'-4" cc for clothes closet depth minimum
 - Walk-in clothes closets: see illustrations above. 5'-6" in clear minimum for clothes on both sides, 4'-6" in clear minimum for clothes on one side of closet.

- Linen closets: Use 2'-0" center to center (c.c.) depth or 1'-8" in clear. 3'-c.c. width w/ 2⁰ door, do not use smaller than 1⁸, giving 2⁸ c.c.
- **Hallways:**
 - Must be a minimum of 3'-6" c.c. width 3'-2" in clear for hallway width.
 - If the door is at the end of a hallway, make the hall center to center width one foot wider than the door (if 2'-8" door, use 3'-8" cc wide hall).
- 3'-6" works on the average size homes (2000 SF approx. heated) but 4' would be desirable
- **Stairways:**
 - Width of stairway: 36" min width permitted within R3 dwelling units.
 - Treads & Risers: Florida Building Code says: Sum of 2 risers + 1 tread = 24"-25".
 - Risers (the height of each step): is a maximum height of 7 ¾. The risers may vary a maximum of ¼" plus or minus from the design height.
 - Treads (width of each step): must be a minimum of 10" and there is always 1 less tread than riser.
 - Open risers are allowable so long as a 4" sphere cannot pass between treads.
 - Headroom: 6'-8" min from edge of nosing to ceiling continuous.
 - Landings: Distance between floors cannot be greater than 12' tall or need a landing.
 - Therefore, cannot have a stairway from first to second floor without a landing if the ground floor is 12' ceiling, because then height from Ground to ceiling = 12'-1", then floor system of 1'-3" added to that.
 - Landing width equals stair width.
 - Minimum length of landing equal to stair width as measured in travel direction of stairway but not more than 4' long.
 - Exception for SFR dwelling with area serving less than 50 people, door can be at top of stairway but cannot open over stairs.
 - Handrails: Located between 34" to 38" above the leading edge of tread.
 - Exception, handrails that are part of a stair that are not req'd to be accessible may be 42" high (balcony overlooking 1st floor).
 - BALLUSTERS SHALL BE SPACED SO AS TO NOT ALLOW PASSAGE OF A SPHERE 4 INCHES (102 mm) OR MORE IN DIAMETER - RAILING SHALL BE NO LESS THAN 36 INCHES (914 mm) IN HEIGHT (FL BLDG CODE 2004 SECTION R312.1 & R312.2) – note to be placed on floor plans

- Ramps/balconies/porches >30" above finished ground level must have a guardrail/handrail – rail at 42" above platform

- **Laundry areas:**

- The doors from the garage area to any living area (including laundry rooms) must be a solid core exterior door for added fire protection. The door must be 2'8" minimum width for easy access including handicap access.
- Need 6' width for washer/dryer space (5'-6" min in clear). A typical washer is 30"x30" and a typical dryer is 30"x30".
- Direct vent through wall for dryer vent is best, can go through roof if laundry room is not on exterior wall, but this is not preferred.

- **Entryways/Foyers:**

- A 6' minimum width entryway/foyer should be used, 5'-6" minimum width on smaller homes.

- **Garages:**

- Should be a minimum depth of 21' and minimum width of 20'.
- 21' x 21' garage works great because then you can convert from front to side entry by merely moving the door.
- Minimum width per car = 10'.
- 2-8 solid core door into garage from living area minimum.
- Make curb 2'-6" from edge of curb to center of rear wall – this gives sufficient distance for the front of your car to hang over curb and leaves room for you to walk in front of the cars.

- **Elevators**

- Require a 12" pit dug into the concrete foundation, so the elevator car lies flat with finished floor on ground level.
- Need 9'-6" tall ceiling on top landing for 8' tall elevator car – that way can fit equipment on top of the elevator instead of needing a storage closet for it.
- Need 220 V 30-amp dedicated circuit for elevator equipment and 110 V 15-amp dedicated circuit for elevator lights.
- A phone line is required in any elevator.
- Can do a wooden frame – 2x4 wall on 3 walls and then 2x12 wall on the fourth wall where the rail the elevator car rides on will be located.

- As of 11-25-22 use \$35,000 allowance for an elevator in a new home.
- Need 5'x5' clearing for an elevator shaft – make 2nd floor in shaft wood that can be knocked out, then have shaft for future elevator if not install one when built.

Site & Exterior:

Beyond the interior of your custom dream home, below are considerations for your exterior land:

- **Septic Tanks/Wells:** Should be located minimum 5' from property line, 75' from well on the new home or adjoin wells on neighbor's properties. Wells used to have to be 25' from house, now they can be 10' from house.
- **Driveways:** Must be 16' wide minimum at the garage area and 12'-14' leading up to garage

Instructions: Please save the completed PDF to your computer and email to:
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