

Buying New Construction

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

DUSTIN CAGLE – LIVING IN IDAHO AT LPT REALTY



So you're thinking about buying *a new build in Idaho?*

Hi, I'm Dustin Cagle, your local real estate agent here in Idaho.

Buying a newly built home is one of the most exciting, and nuanced, real estate decisions you can make.

Unlike a resale, new construction gives you something rare: the ability to shape your own space with modern finishes, energy-efficient systems, and a warranty that creates peace of mind for years to come.

This guide is your roadmap, whether you're just exploring the idea or ready to break ground.

Dustin Cagle
208.965.3036
dustin@livinginidaho.com

How I work *with clients*

As your dedicated agent, I'm here to protect your interests, negotiate on your behalf, and make sure no detail gets overlooked, from your first builder tour to closing day.

💻

Getting Started
A 1:1 meeting to understand your goals, timeline, and budget. Plus guidance on which builders & communities are the right fit.

🏠

Builder Guidance
Access to my vetted builder list, contract review, and design meeting support so you're never navigating decisions alone.

🤝

End-to-End Support
Full representation from lot selection to closing. Walkthroughs, punch list review & advocacy at every step.

A Note on *Representation*

Understanding who represents your interests is *paramount* when purchasing new construction home. While builder sales agents are knowledgeable, their primary allegiance is to the builder.

Having an independent agent by your side ensures your needs and financial well-being are prioritized throughout the process.

Choose an agent first

Choose your agent **before** visiting model homes or contacting the builder. Even informal interactions with the builder can waive your representation rights.



Representation is free

The builder pays your agent's commission. That means you get expert representation at no cost.



Let your agent do the heavy lifting

Share communities and builders with your agent. They'll manage showings & communication with the builder on your behalf.



Why New *Construction?*

CUSTOMIZATIONS

From floor plans to finishes, new construction lets you customize your home to fit your style and budget, whether you go fully custom or choose a more affordable semi-custom build.

LOW MAINTENANCE LIVING

New means lower-maintenance. It also means your home is built to today's energy efficiency standards, something older homes simply can't match

WARRANTIES

Warranties are a *big reason* for choosing new construction. They typically cover roof, HVAC, appliances, and often extend to windows, doors, plumbing, electrical, and workmanship.

APPRECIATION POTENTIAL

New builds often appreciate faster than older homes — as the neighborhood develops and demand grows, so does the value of your investment



The New Construction *Process*

01

CHOOSE YOUR AGENT

Before exploring any communities or builders, choose your real estate agent and have them registered with the builder. This is a critical step! Without agent representation upfront, you may waive your right to representation entirely. Your agent is your advocate from day one.

02

RESEARCH & BUILDER SELECTION

Explore communities, compare builders, and evaluate floor plans. This is where your agent becomes invaluable - we identify reputable builders and flag any red flags before you commit.

03

LOT SELECTION & CONTRACT

Choose your homesite and review the builder's purchase agreement. Builder contracts heavily favor the builder. Always have your agent and a real estate attorney review before signing.

04

DESIGN APPOINTMENTS

Select your finishes, fixtures, and upgrades. Budget carefully, upgrade costs add up quickly. Prioritize structural upgrades over cosmetic ones, which are easier to change later.

05

CONSTRUCTION & INSPECTIONS

Your home is built in stages over several months. Schedule independent inspections at the pre-drywall and pre-closing phases, don't rely solely on the builder's inspector.

06

FINAL WALKTHROUGH & CLOSING

Conduct a thorough walkthrough with a punch list of any outstanding items. Review your closing disclosure carefully. Once you close, the home is yours!

Choosing your *Home Type*

SPEC HOMES

Built without a specific buyer in mind, spec homes are the fastest and most cost-effective option. They're typically move-in ready with limited customization, though if you catch one early enough, you may still get to choose finishes like paint or flooring.

SEMI-CUSTOM HOMES

Built in phases within a development, semi-custom homes offer set floor plans with room to personalize. Buyers typically purchase before completion, with the ability to personalize finishes or upgrades within the builder's guidelines

CUSTOM HOMES

A custom home is built entirely to the buyer's specifications. You purchase the land, contract a builder, and choose everything from the floor plan to the finishes, often with guidance from the builder or an interior designer.



Understanding Your *Customization Options*

Understanding the level of customization available in new construction depends largely on the type of home you're building... from semi-custom to fully custom.

Semi-Custom Homes

Semi-custom doesn't mean one-size-fits-all. Builders offer curated packages to personalize your home with upgrades available.

TYPICAL CUSTOMIZATIONS

- Exterior paint colors
- Interior paint colors
- Flooring
- Cabinetry
- Door hardware
- Countertops
- Light fixtures
- Tile & backsplash
- Doors
- Appliances
- Landscaping

Custom Homes

Custom builds offer the most flexibility. We'll work closely with the builder's project manager make decisions at each stage.

TYPICAL CUSTOMIZATIONS

- Floor plan & overall design
- Exterior finishes and colors
- Windows, doors, hardware
- Interior colors
- Flooring
- Cabinetry & hardware
- Countertops & backsplash
- Bath & shower styles
- Plumbing & lighting fixtures
- Closet design & layout
- Landscaping
- Outdoor amenities

Working with *a Builder*

> Not all builders are *created equal.* Reputation, financial stability, and after-sale service matter just as much as the floor plan you fall in love with.

01/ EVALUATE YOUR BUILDER

Your agent researches the builder's track record and reputation. Independently verify by reading reviews, and visiting completed homes or communities.

02 / TOUR MODEL HOMES

Tour homes with your agent. Remember, model homes showcase premium finishes. Your agent can clarify what's standard vs. optional upgrades so you know exactly what's included in your contract price.

03/ UNDERSTAND THE CONTRACT

Builder contracts are written to protect the builder, not the buyer. Your agent will review the purchase agreement and flag terms around deposit forfeiture, price escalation clauses, warranties, and change order policies before you sign.

04/ DISCUSS CUSTOMIZATIONS

Discuss customizations available. Your agent will manage critical deadlines for structural changes and design selections, keeping you on track so all choices are submitted to the builder on time.



Questions to ask *Your Builder*

- How long have you been building in this market?
- What is your standard completion timeline?
- What does your warranty cover and for how long?
- Am I required to use your preferred lender?
- Can I choose features that are not in your package?
- What’s included in the landscaping package?
- Will you charge for unexpected cost increases?
- How do you handle construction delays, and how will you communicate updates?
- What happens to my deposit if I need to back out?
- Are there penalties if the home isn't completed on time?
- Is there an HOA, and what are the fees and restrictions?
- What amenities are planned for the community, and what's the timeline?
- How do I submit a warranty claim, and what's the response time?



Let's Talk *Financing*

> Many builders have preferred lenders & offer closing cost incentives for using them. These are the typical financing options available to you:

Financing Options

01/ SINGLE-CLOSE LOAN

Also called a Construction-to-Permanent Loan, it covers the build phase and converts to a standard mortgage at closing. One application, one closing. Simple & often preferred by builders.

02/ BUILDER'S PREFERRED LENDER

Builders often offer closing cost credits or upgrades when you use their in-house lender. Shop around, sometimes the incentives are genuinely competitive.

03/ TRADITIONAL MORTGAGE

Used when purchasing a spec home (already built). Standard underwriting applies; shop rates widely before committing.



Lender *Considerations*

Lender Questions

- What is your rate lock period and what are the associated fees?
- Do you offer float-down options if rates decrease?
- What are the specific closing costs for new construction?
- Are there builder incentives or closing cost credits available?
- What is the timeline for final loan approval?
- How do construction-to-permanent loans work with your company?

Recommended Lenders

Diane VanOverbeke
Movement Mortgage
Diane.VanOverbeke@movement.com

Toni Wood
Movement Mortgage
Toni.wood@movement.com



Prepare *to Close*

01/ INDEPENDENT INSPECTION

Even on a brand-new home, an independent inspection is worth considering. A good inspector can catch issues that slipped past the contractor or code enforcement, giving you added peace of mind before closing.

02/ FINAL LOAN APPROVAL

Protect your closing. Avoid major purchases, new credit inquiries, or job changes between contract and closing. Any shift in your financial profile can delay funding. When in doubt, ask your lender first.

03/ THE FINAL WALKTHROUGH

Before closing, you & your agent will walk through the home with your builder to document outstanding items on the "punch list." Touch-ups, landscaping, lock changes, & anything that needs to be completed before closing.



Construction *Terms to Know*

Base Price: The starting price of a home before upgrades, lot premiums, or any customizations are added.

Blueprints: Detailed architectural drawings that guide the builder through every phase of construction.

Certificate of Occupancy (CO): An official document confirming the home meets local codes and is safe to occupy.

Closing Costs: Fees due at closing, including title, lender, and government charges.

Design Center: A builder's showroom where buyers select finishes, fixtures, and upgrades for their new home.

Elevation: The exterior style or architectural design of a home, such as Craftsman or Modern.

Escrow: A neutral account where funds are held until all conditions of the purchase are satisfied.

Floor Plan: A layout showing the arrangement, size, and flow of rooms throughout the home.

HOA (Homeowners Association): An organization that manages shared community spaces and enforces neighborhood guidelines.

Lot: The parcel of land on which your new home will be built.

Lot Premium: An added cost for selecting a more desirable lot, such as a corner or cul-de-sac.

Permits: Government-issued authorizations required before construction or modifications can begin.

Pre-Construction: The phase before building begins, covering planning, permitting, and lot selection.

Punch List: A checklist of items the builder must complete or correct before closing on the home.

Rate Lock: An agreement with your lender that secures your interest rate for a set period of time.

Upgrades: Optional finishes or features added to the base home for an additional cost.

Walkthrough: A pre-closing inspection where you and your agent review the home with the builder.

Warranty: A builder's guarantee covering specific components of the home for a defined period.

Zoning: Local regulations that define how a property or piece of land may be used.



Whether you're ready to *start touring homes...*

Or you're just beginning to explore your options, **here's how I can help:**

- Book an intro call to talk through your goals, timeline & budget
- I'll share my vetted builder list and recommend communities
- We'll move at your pace. Whether that means touring homes this weekend or planning ahead for next year

Dustin Cagle

DUSTIN CAGLE | REALTOR® | 208.965.3036 | DUSTIN@LIVINGINIDAHO.COM

Reach *Out!*

Have questions about new construction options in Idaho? You don't have to be ready to buy to get in touch! Send me an email or schedule a call below.

SCHEDULE A CALL