A chance to have your say

Use the opportunity to rate your new home builder

HOWARD BOGACH
YOUR NEW HOME

Calling all new home buyers! If you bought a new home in the past year, this is your chance to tell Tarion all about your home buying experience.

Every fall, Tarion sends customer satisfaction surveys across the province to most new home buyers. We’re looking for feedback on your builder’s customer service and your experience with Tarion.

The survey covers most stages of the new home buying experience, beginning with the signing of the agreement of purchase and sale, through to construction, the pre-delivery inspection, and finally your builder’s after-sales service. You’ll also be asked about your interactions with Tarion.

As a recent new home buyer, your feedback is essential in improving the new home buying experience for everyone in Ontario. Over the years, significant enhancements have come to fruition directly based on the feedback we receive from our annual survey.

For example, results of our surveys over the past few years have shown us that homeowners who use our online warranty service, MyHome, continue to have a significantly higher level of satisfaction with Tarion than those who didn’t manage their warranty through MyHome.

This kind of information helps us focus on what homeowners want, such as updating the features of MyHome to help make managing your warranty a more seamless process.

Your opinion also helps us educate builders, letting them know what they are doing right, or where improvements can be made. Over the many years that Tarion has been conducting this survey, we’ve noticed a clear trend in what matters most to homeowners, based on certain attributes that are directly correlated to whether a homeowner will recommend their builder.

Some examples include the builder’s ability to deliver the home as agreed to in the Agreement of Purchase and Sale, overall customer satisfaction before move-in, the builder’s level of accessibility and the builder’s ability to complete repairs and leave the home clean and undamaged. This information helps Tarion work with builders to improve their customer service. Every year, builders that have enough responses to their surveys are provided with detailed individual builder reports comparing their results to the average (without identifying the participants, of course).

We also meet with builders to help analyze their scores and offer advice on improving customer service, host builder clinics that include information on what matters most to homeowners and deliver customer service training to low performing builders.

Survey results are also used to determine finalists and recipients of the Tarion Awards of Excellence. The Awards of Excellence are the only awards in the province that recognize builders solely on the basis of their customer service.

And they are judged by the people whose opinions matter most — yours.

So, if you have taken possession of a new home in the past year, look for the Tarion survey arriving in your mailbox or inbox this month. This is your chance to tell us about your home buying experience and influence whether your builder should be recognized for their customer service.

And remember — your opinion matters, so share it with us!

— Howard Bogach is president and CEO of Tarion Warranty Corp., a private corporation established in 1976 to protect the rights of new home buyers. For more information, visit www.tarion.com.

Natural gas fireplaces — the hot new trend

Interest in natural gas fireplaces has increased over the past several years. Many builders are now including at least one unit with each of their new homes. Improvements in technology have resulted in more realistic “burns”. New models and accessories have provided homeowners with more choices than ever before. Concern over possible hydro outages has propelled homeowners to consider alternate sources of heat. Natural gas fireplaces can operate without electricity and because they are environmentally as well as user friendly, they have become a popular choice.

Natural gas fireplaces are available in a variety of types. Inserts are used in converting existing wood burning fireplaces. Direct vent models are generally used in applications where no fireplace currently exists.

Freestanding units can either be direct vent models or natural draft, which means that they would use a chimney. Log-sets are used in existing wood burning fireplaces and are less efficient than insert models.

eieihome spoke with Nancy McKeraghan of Canco ClimateCare Heating & Air Conditioning, about what homeowners should consider when deciding if a natural gas fireplace is the right choice for them.

Think about how the fireplace is going to be used. Should it be on a thermostat or on a switch or controlled with a remote? If it is to be used as a primary source of heat, make sure that it is rated accordingly.

The proper fireplace should have the appropriate amount of BTU’s to fit the application. In other words, it should be comfortable to sit in the room when the fireplace is on without being too hot.

Always insist on having an in-home quotation. Never buy a unit off a showroom floor without verifying that it suits the application. That can only be done via an on-site visit. Access to gas lines, venting requirements, code restrictions and finishing options can then be determined.

What warranties are standard with the unit and if needed, are parts readily available?

Is the contractor knowledgeable and qualified to work with natural gas? Nancy says that fireplaces operating with natural gas are less expensive to operate than those that use other fuels. As with every fossil fuel appliance they should be serviced by a licensed professional every year. Canco ClimateCare’s technicians have all the licenses and certifications required. No cost/no obligation on-site visits can be arranged.

Homeowners can be assured that when they choose Canco ClimateCare, they will receive superior customer service and a promise of comfort, accountability, reliability, and excellence.

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