HOMEOWNER REPAIR GUIDE

PLANNING YOUR NEW GARAGE

It's never easy to decide to spend more money, but a new garage is a long-term investment. Unfortunately, many contractors believe that homeowners are looking only at cost, so they base their bid on coming in with the lowest price. However, it's smart to look not only at price, but also at the quality and longevity of the design, materials, and construction methods that will be used.

WHERE YOUR CHOICES MATTER MOST

AREA	OUR RECOMMENDATION
Overall design	We suggest that you select a design with a gabled roof, rather than a flat "shed-type" structure.
Foundation	The strongest design has a footer poured first. Later, a short wall is added above it, molded from concrete or built from concrete block. After this perimeter wall has cured, a separate concrete floor is poured inside it. The garage walls are built upon and bolted to the foundation wall after it has set. Although more expensive, this design is less likely to crack than a monolithic slab, where the floor and a short perimeter wall are poured all at the same time. *(See separate handout on "Garage Foundations" for additional details.)*
Siding	T1-11, O.S.B., and hardboard lap siding can quickly disintegrate if the surface is scuffed. Although the cost will be higher, you will be much better off if you choose wood siding or shingles, or fiber-cement, vinyl, or polypropylene siding – all of which will hold up better to the normal dings and dents that happen to garage walls. *(See separate handout on "Siding Options" for additional details.)*
Roofing	With gabled-roof garages, generally covered with roofing shingles, your primary concern (other than matching the color and appearance of your house roof) will be how long a manufacturer's warranty is given on the shingles. For shed-type garages, modified bitumen roofing (cold process or hot process) will look like traditional roll roofing, but will last MUCH longer. More rarely, you may want to consider single-ply EPDM (a pure-rubber product) or – on an extremely large surface – B.U.R. (built-up roof). *Don't* use asphalt roll roofing, as it will need to be replaced far sooner than the other materials. *(See separate handout on "Roofing Materials" for additional details.)*

LOOK TO THE FUTURE

When making your decisions, look to the future. Even if you are purchasing a garage “kit,” talk to the supplier and see how much it would cost to upgrade their “standard” materials to ones that are longer-lasting. The extra money you spend might turn out to be a bargain five or ten years from now.

Home Repair Resource Center empowers homeowners to maintain their homes for sustainable and diverse communities.

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