

The 3 Insurance Pillars of Home Closing Reliability



What builders need to know about today's closing challenges.



Custom content for Westwood Insurance Agency by  **Zonda**,
part of CoStar Realty Information, Inc., a Delaware corporation

In 2023 the single-family housing industry witnessed an unprecedented number of admitted home insurance carrier [pullbacks](#). A year later the industry was rocked by a [surge of policy non-renewals and cancellations](#).

Today those concerns are diminishing.

Builders can more confidently plan projects knowing there is an insurance market available to the home buyer. One way the insurance industry has achieved this is by tightening underwriting requirements. Many insurance carriers now carefully assess local climate conditions, zoning, a homebuyer's insurance history and other risk factors.

Another factor is the growing role of surplus lines carriers. These carriers have helped backfill the loss of traditional admitted insurance companies in states hard-hit by extreme weather events.

“Our builder partners like that their buyer has a highly competitive home insurance offer up front. We closely monitor the process throughout contract to close and keep all parties thoroughly informed and on track. No surprises. No suspense.

—Christi Burkhardt

How do surplus lines carriers operate in higher-risk environments? They have the flexibility to adjust rates, terms, and deductibles to better match risk. Flexibility also results in a home insurance policy subject to price fluctuations that can be a closing friction point.

Closing Reliability = Improved Builder Margins

“The sooner a home buyer reviews their insurance options, the better,” advises Christi Burkhardt, vice president, national sales and growth at [Westwood Insurance Agency](#), a leading insurance agency that quotes on more than 75% of newly constructed U.S. homes.

The need for speed is well-founded: The National Association of Realtors (NAR) [reports](#) 14% of new home closings are delayed. Failure to close on time costs homebuilders untold millions of dollars each year in unplanned construction loan interest, builder's risk insurance and frozen capital that disrupts project planning and scheduling.

Taken together—the changing composition of insurance players and more time required for underwriting—the changing dynamics present new pressures on closing deadlines. The imperative to close on time, every time remains key to margin preservation.





Clear the Path to Closing Certainty

“Even today, insurance is something the buyer doesn’t necessarily think about until late in the process,” observes Mark Tribendis, vice president of business development at [Westwood Insurance Agency](#). “It makes sense to remove that potential closing delay as quickly as possible, for everyone’s sake.”

What’s different today is the possibility of shifting insurance rates and terms. To help guard against unpleasant late-stage surprises, builders should expect their

“ Embedding the home insurance piece at the contract signing stage is the smart way to mitigate chance and risk for the builder. The key is to keep the process moving forward with value, transparency, and convenience. ”

—Mark Tribendis

insurance partner to provide constant vigilance over the unexpected. “As the insurance expert, we have to stay close to the customer all the way to closing. Surplus rates fluctuate a lot more than admitted market rates,” explains Burkhardt.

More and more home building professionals deploy a three-pillar strategy to preserve margins and push projects across the finish line:

Pillar I Seize the Offensive

Don’t wait for the home buyer to make the first move. Profit-minded builders move aggressively to control the narrative on home closing requirements.

That begins by embedding the insurance piece upfront, right at contract signing. That allows the builder to exert more control and reduce the risk of closing delay. Is the buyer gathering quotes? Will those quotes be considered in a timely manner? If something goes sideways at the last minute, can the insurance agency be trusted to rapidly solve the issue? Is the buyer considering an

insurance policy all parties (especially the mortgage lender) are comfortable with?

“Embedding the home insurance piece at the contract signing stage is the smart way to mitigate chance and risk for the builder,” Tribendis says. “The key is to keep the process moving forward with value, transparency, and convenience.”

Burkhardt adds, “Our builder partners like that their buyer has a highly competitive home insurance offer up front. We closely monitor the process throughout contract to close and keep all parties thoroughly informed and on track. No surprises. No suspense.”

Pillar II Understand an Evolving Insurance Marketplace

Changing market conditions require changing builder and buyer support solutions. The rise of surplus lines carriers to better address high-risk environments is a good example. “We work with more than 60 insurance companies to ensure our builder partners always have a market for their buyers,” Burkhardt reports.

A growing reliance on surplus carriers means insurance rates can change quickly. That rate uncertainty has the potential to disrupt buyer financing. An agency like Westwood works hard to prevent that by continuously shopping carriers and presenting buyers with an immediate Plan B as the situation warrants.

Moving to the buyer's communication preferences is also a factor in a successful buyer's journey. Some home buyers prefer a white glove, high touch treatment, such as personally interacting with a licensed insurance agent. Others prefer anytime, anywhere online speed and convenience. Westwood, for example, serves buyers the way they like with technology or live expert support.

Pillar III

Think Beyond the Close

Earning a five-star rating from a home buyer is the goal of every builder. A happy customer is the foundation of long-term success, especially in a time when social media can burnish or tarnish a reputation.

The [Net Promoter Score](#) (NPS) is the de facto standard for measuring customer satisfaction. NPS measures how likely customers are to recommend a company, product, or service to others. Bain & Company, the creators of NPS, state a score of 20 or higher is favorable, 50 or higher is excellent, and 80 or above is world class.



The Westwood 2025 NPS score is 92.

An independent, third-party assessment of a partner's commitment to customer satisfaction, like NPS, is a solid vetting benchmark. Perhaps doubly so for a homebuilder where the stakes are immeasurably higher.

Tribendis suggests another testing option: Ask fellow builders. "It's always a great option to hear what other builders say about any home insurance agency you're considering," Tribendis advises. "How do they handle quoting, online convenience, system integration, and professionalism? Are you happy with their performance?"

Stronger and More Confident

Home insurance is in a stronger, more resilient place after weathering the turbulence of 2024 and 2025. Westwood is a leading example of how insurance agencies have robustly adapted and invested in processes and procedures that better serve home builders and buyers.

Today builders can feel confident that nearly all housing markets nationwide have access to home insurance. As you weigh home insurance partners, consider the proven reliability, experience, and leadership of Westwood Insurance Agency.

Builders don't need to face difficult home insurance matters on their own.

Clear the path to closing certainty with an insurance partner that understands the evolving insurance marketplace.

Helping builders close on time, every time ... it's what Westwood has been all about since 1952.



Stable and sustainable.

There's never been a better time to safeguard closings with home insurance you can count on.

To learn how to minimize home closing disruption, visit [Westwood Insurance Agency](https://westwoodinsurance.com/partners).



westwoodinsurance.com/partners