

Steel Building Buyer's Guide

With nearly a decade in the steel building business, Buck Steel has accumulated a tremendous amount of experience assisting a wide variety of customers in planning, designing, and erecting their steel building projects. This guide is an attempt, by us, to share some of our steel building industry experience with you in an effort to ensure that you don't fall victim to some of the errors we have witnessed others make over the years. Irrespective of whom you choose for your steel building supplier, we want your project to be a successful.



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VALUABLE STEEL BUILDING BUYING ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS AT BUCK STEEL

COMPARING QUOTES - MORE DIFFICULT THAN YOU MIGHT THINK

Discard any quotes provided to you by any company telling you it's a "one - day special offer" or "cancelled order". Steel building companies that use the "cancelled order" story are often the least reputable in the business and simply telemarketing firms. Study the remaining quotes and attempt to compare apples with apples. Make sure that the length, width, height, and roof pitch are the same as well as the wind load, exposure, live load, snow load and other engineering details. Differences in steel building engineering details between quotes could result in a significant difference in price. Discard any quote that does not clearly specify the engineering details used to design the building being quoted.

Make certain that features you assume to be standard are in fact that and not listed in the "options" section in a confusing or misleading manner. All included items and optional items should be clearly marked as such and remember if it isn't listed in writing as being included - then it isn't.

BE CAREFUL - DON'T FALL VICTIM TO "THE BUMP"

Telemarketers and unscrupulous steel building companies will often price your building with wind, exposure, or snow requirements LESS than your local building codes require - just to quote you a low price. Once they obtain your deposit, they will advise you that the cost of your building is substantially more due to modifications needed in order to meet your local building codes. This is commonly referred to in the industry as "the bump".

UNDERSTANDING ANCHOR BOLT PLANS AND FOUNDATION PLANS

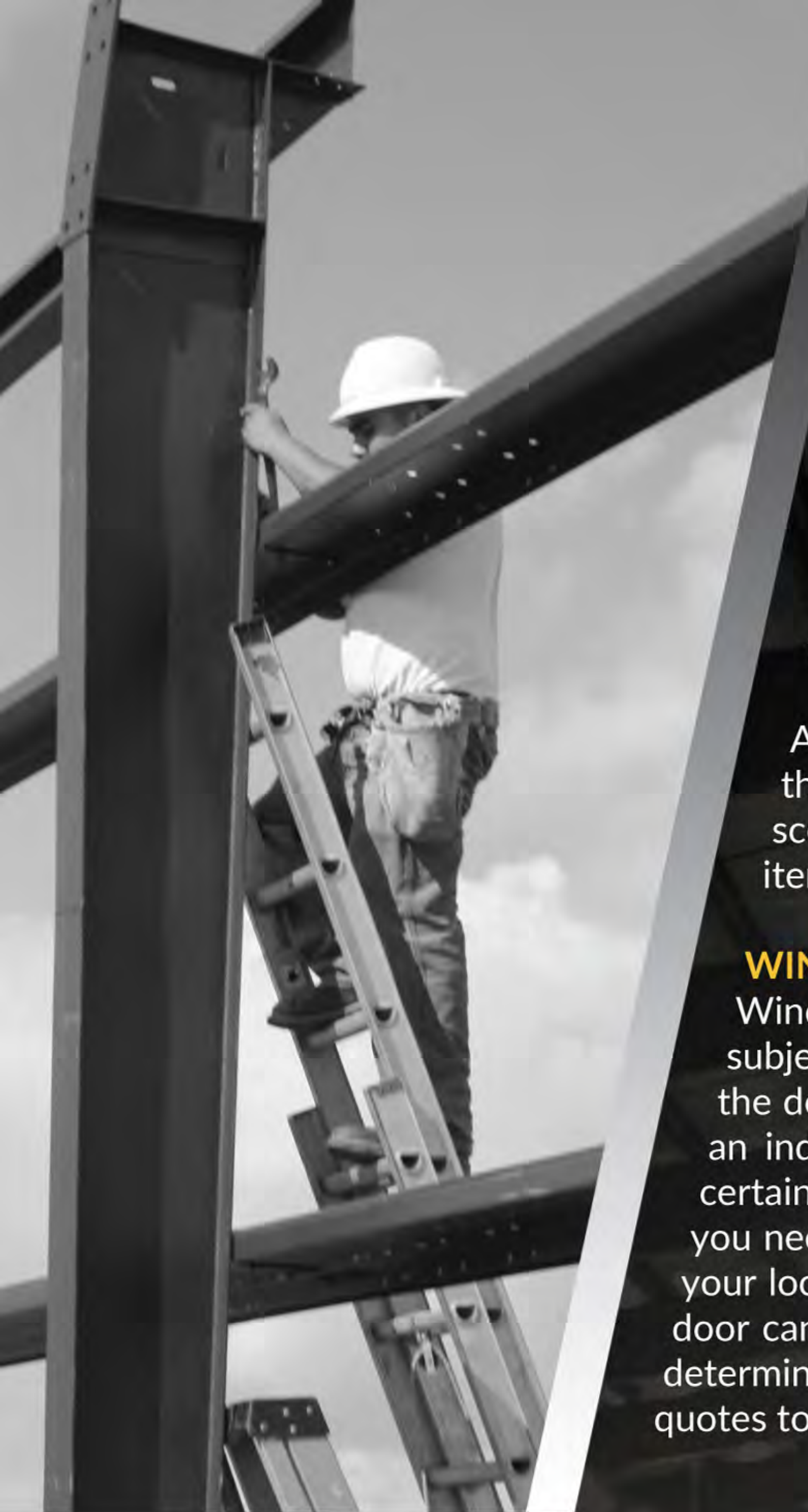
Anchor bolt plans come standard with all buildings. They are drawings representing the design of the base plates on the columns, showing the location of the anchor bolts used to secure the building to the slab.

Foundation drawings are drawings that are designed using your building information and soil condition which tell the concrete contractor how large the piers have to be along with detailed specifications of size and placement of rebar, wire mesh and hairpins. Counties often require a set of stamped foundation drawings as part of the normal permit process. Most steel building companies do not provide foundation drawings.

ACCESSORY PLACEMENT AFFECTS COST

Every metal building needs to be braced in order to maintain its structural integrity. Depending on the bracing method used, the bay being braced might be unavailable for use with accessories such as rollup doors, personnel doors, windows, etc. or an alternative higher cost bracing method might have to be used. Be suspicious of any steel building company that does not discuss accessory placement prior to providing you a quote. Additionally, the placement of your accessories should be clearly specified on your quote - as well as the bracing method used to brace the building.





THE "COMPONENTS BUILDING"

Component buildings should be avoided at all cost. Steel factory engineering departments are consistently overbooked and instead of the factories turning work away, they have moved the burden (and cost) of engineering the building to the component building broker. Component building brokers use metal building engineering software to engineer their own buildings and then source them out to several different component factories.

A frame shop may make the primary frames while another factory will make the secondary framing, purlins, girts etc. while still another factory might roll the panels for the roof and walls. In the end this leaves a greater margin for error in the fabrication of your steel building and results in additional shipping costs.

Additionally, the "morning of delivery" may actually wind up being the "week of delivery" by the time all the different shipments actually arrive from their respective factories. This scenario also makes it easy for all concerned parties to engage in the "blame game" when items are missing or damaged in shipment leaving you unable to erect your building.

WIND RATED DOORS VS. WIND CERTIFIED DOORS

Wind "rated" simply means that the door being provided for your metal building has been subjected to internal wind testing by the manufacturer of the door. Wind "certified" means that the door being provided for your metal building has gone through very intense wind testing in an independent laboratory, meets all the requirements of the pressures required to sustain certain weather conditions, and will have a label stating such affixed to the door. Whether or not you need a wind "rated" door, a wind "certified" door, or simply a standard door will depend on your local building department. The difference in price of a standard door and a wind "certified" door can be substantial! We strongly recommend you contact your local building department to determine what kind of doors will be required for your building and then to carefully review your quotes to make sure the required type of door is the one being quoted.

FULL COVER TRIM VS. TRIM PACKAGE

Some companies use the term "trim package" to lead you to believe that you are getting a complete trim piece to cover the "C" channel framed opening - otherwise known as "full cover trim", when in fact they are merely providing you with the basic "J-trim" package provided with every building.

BUILDING PERMITS

Before making any purchasing decision, you should visit the local building department with a copy of the building specifications from the company you want to do business with in hand. Present the information to the building authority to get a preliminary verbal approval before proceeding. Also check with your HOA or other such organization to make sure they will allow you to erect a steel building.

STEEL PRICES ON THE RISE?

Steel prices do fluctuate and it is not uncommon for us to have several price adjustments in a year. A reputable company should clearly state, in writing, the period for which a quote remains valid; 30 days is reasonable.

THE OLDEST TRICK IN THE BOOK

While we have mentioned the infamous "cancelled order" sales pitch earlier it bears another mention. Beware of any metal steel building company that allows their salesmen to use this dishonest selling technique. The "cancelled order" sales pitch has been used by unethical salesmen, telemarketers, and untrained metal building brokers for ages. Why? Because it works—unsuspecting customers fall for it all the time. We recommend that if you hear about "one-day sales" or "cancelled orders" and are asked to provide a credit card number over the phone for a deposit that you hang up the phone! Find another company to work with and remember that the overwhelming majority of steel building companies are honest, knowledgeable, and eager to have your business.

