

How to connect with Tarion



HOWARD BOGACH YOUR NEW HOME

Over the last few years, Tarion has been focusing on improving our channels of communication with homeowners and builders. By embracing different forms of electronic communication, we have been able to offer our stakeholders multiple ways to contact us that are faster, more convenient and more efficient than ever before.

We hope creating more options to connect will make it easier for homeowners to manage their warranty, and for builders to conduct their businesses. So if you are looking to get in touch, here's a rundown of how we've expanded your options in recent years.

Online chatting

Homeowners have had the ability to submit warranty forms online since 2010 through Tarion's online warranty portal, MyHome. Through this service, homeowners can easily submit 30-Day, One-Year and Two-Year warranty forms, and chat live with a Tarion employee if they need assistance at any time. The live chat feature was introduced in 2014 to help homeowners navigate MyHome as they used the site. If you haven't signed up for MyHome yet, go to Tarion.com and click "MyHome" from the homepage. While you are on MyHome, simply click "live chat" and a Tarion employee will walk you through the process, or answer any questions you may have.

Ask Tarion

In 2014, Tarion launched a featured called "Ask Tarion" on our website. Unlike a standard search engine that can lead to information overload, this service answers your questions instantly. To ensure accuracy, we review the data regularly and add questions and answers as needed or modify responses to

better suit what is being asked. Since launching last May, users received the answer they were looking for on the first try 84% of the time. Do you have any questions to ask us? Go to our website and give it a try!

We've gone social!

Tarion launched multiple social media channels in 2013 as another way to engage with stakeholders. These channels include Facebook, Linked In and YouTube. We also recently launched on Twitter. Social media has opened channels of communication for homeowners who may not have otherwise contacted us to ask questions and provide feedback.

Facebook in particular allowed Tarion to connect with homeowners during the ice storm in December 2013, when our systems were down due to power outages. Homeowners were concerned about submitting their forms, and Tarion used social media to reassure them and provide alternate methods of submitting information.

Tarion uses YouTube to host educational videos for homeowners and builders ranging in topic from the most common warranty issues to tutorials aimed specifically at condominium corporations. If you are going through the warranty process or buy-

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ing a new home, I encourage you to visit our YouTube channel accessible through Tarion.com.

Recently, Tarion launched our official Twitter presence to offer another way for homeowners and builders to keep in touch and access the latest information on the warranty. Follow us at @tarionwarranty.

Of course, you can always call, email or drop by. Tarion's Customer Service Centre continues to be the first line of contact for homeowners when they have questions or concerns. Last year, Tarion responded to almost 180,000 telephone calls from homeowners and builders. Most commonly, callers were asking about warranty coverage, the claims process or the status of a specific claim.

Tarion's offices are located in Toronto, Ottawa and London if you prefer to drop by in person, and our website also has a "contact us" section that makes it simple to send us an email. So if you have any questions for us, would like to send feedback, or to simply chat about your new home warranty, use one of the methods above, and let's connect!

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



Function and style collide when choosing flooring



LISA EVANS
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Flooring is a key part of the design of your home, playing an important role in the look, feel and function of your living space. A new floor is a big investment and should take into account both style and function. eieihome spoke with Andrew Bridi, owner of On Centre Design Build, a custom home builder and renovator in the GTA, for his tips on finding the right flooring for any space.

Consider floor traffic. Whether you're a busy family with young kids and pets or a mature couple will determine the type of flooring that will best suit your home. While hardwood flooring is a great fit for a low-traffic home, a high-traffic home would be better suited by laminate or resilient flooring - a vinyl flooring that can be made to look like hardwood or stone. "Resilient

flooring is especially popular in basements, is economically priced, very durable, resistant to high humidity and doesn't scratch like wood," says Bridi.

Location. While solid hardwood flooring is still popular on main floors, this flooring is not ideal for basements since hardwood can easily be damaged by moisture that comes up through the ground. The installation process also makes hardwood floors a poor choice for basements. "Basements require a flooring that can be installed on a concrete surface," says Bridi. Engineered wood, laminate or resilient flooring are installed as a floating floor and are popular choices in basements.

Heat your tootsies. When renovating a bathroom, consider a heated floor. "The costs for heated floors have drastically dropped as technology has

improved," says Bridi. A heated floor can cost around \$15 per square foot. Plus, there's nothing like the feeling of warm tile under your feet, especially in the middle of winter.

Budget. Changing your flooring can be one of your home's most expensive improvements. Hardwood and engineered flooring are the most expensive, costing around \$5 to \$10/square foot. Laminate can cost around \$1 to \$4/square foot while resilient vinyl flooring lands in the middle, costing \$4 to \$6/square foot.

Bring home a sample. The last thing you want to do is install 1,000 square feet of Gray Oak based on a sample from a showroom only to find it clashes with your cabinets or furniture. Since the lighting in your home is different than that in the store, asking for a sample to take home is the best way to determine if the colour is right for your space.

— Visit eieihome.com for more flooring stories, including "Tips to Clean Flooring," contractor reviews and find local service professionals.