

2019 WEATHER CAUSING SIGNIFICANT DELAYS IN HOME CONSTRUCTION



2019: A Year of Snow, Cold, and Rain

2019 has offered some difficult weather conditions for Wisconsin residents. The year began with a once-in-a-generation Polar Vortex featuring temperatures that dipped [below -20 degrees across the state](#).

[Meteorologists are comparing](#) 2019 to the Great Midwest Flood of 1993.

[Wisconsin farmers](#) are losing thousands of dollars due to rain delays as [well as cold weather](#).

[Soil moisture is registering in the top-1 percentile](#) for early June across much of the Midwest.

Even baseball has been impacted by the weather...with [Routine Field in Franklin behind schedule](#), the Milwaukee Milkmen had to move the first five home series to a field in Indiana. By the end of May, the Brew Crew had played only four home games out of 29 with the [roof open](#).

When you take those rain delays that followed the bitter cold Polar Vortex of early 2019, construction season is looking soggy and slow.

“Major winter storms produced hurricane-force winds, heavy snow and coastal flooding along the Great

Lakes”

[National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#)

For homeowners and builders alike, timely construction is important. It keeps budget, calendar, payments, trade contractors, closing dates, and everyone’s happiness and sanity on track. But sometimes, despite the best attempts, Mother Nature still rules the jobsite.

2019 has brought exceptional challenges to the construction industry. The average home build has stretched from 6 months to 8 this season, due in large part to weather-related construction delays. With early deep freezes, seasonal road weight restrictions, availability of labor, jobsite accessibility, safety issues, soil moisture concerns, and product temperature requirements, each delay has a unique impact on new home construction.

“Soggy conditions from June 2018 through May 2019 led to the wettest 12-month period to on record in the U.S., with 37.68 inches, 7.73 inch above average.”

[National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#)

Early Deep Freezes Delayed Sitework

The Polar Vortex of 2019 hit fast and hard, deep-freezing the ground. Delays in every phase of construction were the result. This year we have seen frozen ground to depths of five feet! Construction was delayed during the Polar Vortex for more than two weeks, with many projects placed on hold for five weeks to accommodate road limits. While sitework isn’t entirely stalled due to ground frost, it can complicate and delay the process, as well as add costs to construction.

Availability of Labor has been Backlogged for Months

Before the near-daily rain that plagued our spring, trade contractors were already facing tightening schedules. The extreme cold and snowy winter didn’t just close Wisconsin schools for snow days, it made construction impossible. With temperatures that dipped into the -50’s with windchill, crews were forced to stop work. In another labor market, bandwidth wouldn’t be as much of a concern. But with the [skilled trades labor shortages](#), every hour a contractor can spend productive on a jobsite matters.

Jobsite Accessibility is Limited Due to Snowy, Wet, and Muddy Conditions

Snow plowing. Puddles. Mud. Trucks, scaffolding, and machinery is at risk of getting stuck, sliding and slipping, risking both damage of the equipment and the safety of the operator. Every jobsite has seen its fair share of mud, but with our late snow melt and every-other-day of rain, Spring has made 2019 particularly challenging.



Crew Safety Means Construction Work Stops

Jobsite safety is a priority for every builder and contractor, and not all work has to stop because of weather. But, some phases of construction are a potentially deadly combination when weather and crew safety collide. Framers and roofers do their best despite ice or rain, but a slick roof surface or high winds can stop work regardless. Electrical service can't be run to the home during wet conditions for obvious reasons, and lightning dictates a stop-work for most trades in the early, rather unprotected phases of construction.

Soil Moisture Delays Excavation, Footing, Foundation, Concrete, and Grading

Simply put, the ground must support the construction of your new home in order to ensure structural integrity. Excavated holes can easily become challenging with heavy rains, and even pumping the water out doesn't mean the ground is ready for construction. Excessive soil moisture levels can compromise footings, foundation, and concrete.

Product Temperature and Humidity Requirements Delay Installation

When it comes to building science, many products have a minimum or desired temperature and humidity for installation. A wet, rainy spring has made both interior and exterior painting, drywall, and caulking a very slow progress.

At Demlang Builders, we do our best to budget for weather delays in our schedule and costs, as well as include added allowances for winter construction. As your partner, we're committed to keeping our Project Management team involved in actively updating the construction timeline and contractor availability, keeping you apprised of the latest schedule changes. Thank you for your patience this year, and keep your chin up as we all endure the clouds that seem to be hovering over our jobsites in 2019. The rain will clear, and soon you'll be enjoying your new Demlang home.

Just a thought though: before it's too late, you might want to consider adding that covered porch! Nothing says backyard retreat like cozying up with a blanket and a cup of coffee watching the rain nourish your newly planted landscape of your first summer in your new home. Inspired by these recent weather challenges, our [2019 Parade of Homes model](#) (the Harper) will feature a 3 1/2 season room designed to offer a relaxing oasis from the ever-changing Wisconsin climate!