



A White Paper on... Surviving a Remodeling Project

Living Through a Remodeling Project

You've signed with a reputable contractor and the remodeling work is about to begin. What you - and your contractor - do next about your working relationship will make the difference between a pleasant experience and an unhappy one.

Your responsibility is to choose the best contractor to do the work - one who is insured and bonded and has a reputation for quality workmanship, reasonable speed, fair prices, and pride in his work. After you've found a professional contractor who meets these qualifications, step back and trust his or her skills - and your own judgment.

But your job doesn't end there. You can do other things to ensure smooth sailing:

- **Make a phase list of procedures.** Have the contractor explain what work will be done so you'll know the time needed for what's involved.
- **Plan adequate storage space.** Make room for materials, tools, and equipment by clearing work area of unnecessary gear.
- **Post the builder's phone number** by your telephone in case a question arises during construction. To avoid confusion, delegate only one family spokesman.
- **Consider the logistics involved** in delivering, shipping, and ordering materials and making the best use of the tradesperson's time and skill. Your contractor is as anxious as you are to finish the job. Allow a margin for human error or for simple forgetfulness.
- **Double-check materials** as they arrive. Once installed, they're all yours. You can cut down last-minute decisions and delays by selecting the materials in advance.
- **Check locks and keys.** You'll probably need to share keys with the contractor or his or her workers. Ask who will take responsibility.
- **Try to stay out of the construction area.** This is important for safety and for maintaining construction schedules. Keep pets, toys, and children out of the workers' way.
- **Expect the unexpected.** No one can prepare you for all the unforeseen incidents that may transpire. It's hard to imagine all the things that could go wrong: late deliveries, strikes, shipment shortages, wrong parts, oversights, rain, on-the-spot changes, etc. Tearing down a wall may uncover a problem that demands plan revisions.
- **Brush up on building methods.** A little construction savvy will help see you through those blue days when workers fail to show up. Could that happen? Yes, you'll find that remodeling proceeds in stages. Separate crews install framing, siding, insulation, masonry, finish carpentry, and roofing. Painters, electricians, and plumbers may all have to make several trips to complete their jobs. Slabs must cure, paint must dry, etc. The schedule is complicated, so don't be surprised if disruptions occur.
- **Workmanship.** Expect the highest of industry standards of quality workmanship. However, don't expect to get too much more than you're paying for.
- **Batten down your belongings.** Cover furniture and carpeting. Use this time to have your draperies and upholstery cleaned. You won't believe the dirt and dust remodeling creates. Your professional contractor will also help you to cover and protect the work area.
- **Be cool.** Keep calm and flexible. Time-clocking workers only builds resentment and won't save a penny or speed up work.
- **Win cooperation** from workers and contractor with good, basic human relations. Nothing makes them work harder than a word of appreciation or an unexpected pot of coffee.
- **Swallow those endless "why's"** that slow down production. Most workers are simply following our orders and construction specs. Discuss construction changes only with an authorized professional contractor.
- **Plan ahead to do without water or power** when workers shut off lines. That way you'll avoid food spoilage in your refrigerator because of an unexpected power shut-off.

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for you?*