

Bathroom Renovation *Checklist*

The decisions, approvals and order of work, from first idea to the first shower.

Most bathroom renovations that run late or over budget have the same causes: decisions made after the room is open, materials ordered too late, and waterproofing treated as an afterthought. Work through this list before demolition and you will avoid most of them.

01 Set the goals

- ☐ What isn't working now: space, storage, the tub, the shower, the floor?
- ☐ Who uses the room, and will that change (children, aging in place)?
- ☐ How long you plan to stay in the home
- ☐ Keep a tub, or convert to a walk-in shower? Is there another tub in the house?
- ☐ A budget range, plus a contingency for what is found behind the walls
- ☐ Your target finish date, and what else depends on it

03 Choose fixtures, then tile

- ☐ Vanity (floating or freestanding) and its size
- ☐ Toilet (floor-mounted or wall-hung with an in-wall carrier)
- ☐ Shower valve, head, handheld and trim
- ☐ Floor tile: rated for wet floors, with good grip
- ☐ Wall tile, shower floor tile and any feature tile
- ☐ Grout type and colour; edge trim or mitred corners
- ☐ Order everything from one batch, with extra for cuts and spares
- ☐ Order long-lead items before demolition

05 The order of work

- 1 Demolition and disposal (test suspect old materials for asbestos first)
- 2 Inspect the subfloor and framing; repair rot and leaks
- 3 Plumbing rough-in: drains, valve at the right depth for your tile
- 4 Electrical rough-in: lights, fan, outlets, heated-floor circuit
- 5 Exhaust fan ducted to the outside
- 6 Framing: niches, bench, blocking for grab bars and glass
- 7 Insulation and drywall outside the wet area

02 Decide the layout

- ☐ Fixtures stay where they are, or move? (Moving drains is one of the biggest cost drivers.)
- ☐ Shower type: pre-formed base or tiled floor
- ☐ Curb, low curb or curbless entry
- ☐ Centre drain or linear drain
- ☐ Niche location (interior wall, out of the direct spray) and size
- ☐ Bench, grab-bar blocking, handheld shower
- ☐ Heated floor: yes or no (decide before rough-in)
- ☐ Glass: fixed panel, hinged door or slider

04 Approvals and trades

- ☐ Ask the City of Ottawa whether your plumbing, wall or structural changes need a building permit
- ☐ Electrical work needs an ESA permit; a licensed electrician usually arranges it
- ☐ Condo: board approval, working hours, elevator, water shut-offs, underlay rules
- ☐ Who coordinates: a general contractor or you
- ☐ Plumber, electrician, tile installer, drywall and paint, glass: booked in order
- ☐ A written quote from each, with inclusions and exclusions

- 8 Backer board, sloped shower floor and one waterproofing system
- 9 Flood test the shower floor before any tile
- 10 Tile the shower and floor (heating cable under the floor tile)
- 11 Grout; flexible sealant in corners and at the tub
- 12 Paint, then vanity, toilet, trim and lights
- 13 Glass measured after tile, installed later
- 14 Final walk-through; keep spare tile and paperwork



Get the *Details* Right

The parts you can't see once the tile is on are the parts that decide whether the bathroom lasts.

06 Waterproofing must-haves

- ☐ Tile and grout are not waterproof: a membrane goes behind them
- ☐ One system on walls, floor, niche and curb, installed to its maker's instructions
- ☐ No plain drywall or green board as the only layer in the shower
- ☐ Every seam, corner, pipe and the drain sealed with the system's parts
- ☐ Shower floor sloped to the drain (typically about 1/4" per foot)
- ☐ Niche sill and curb top sloped back into the shower
- ☐ Flood test passed before tiling
- ☐ Inside corners and the tub joint get sealant, not grout

08 Floor and comfort

- ☐ Subfloor stiff and flat enough for the tile size you chose
- ☐ Large tile: very flat floor, full mortar coverage, levelling clips
- ☐ Heated floor: cable only in open floor, tested before and after tiling
- ☐ Floor height checked at the door, the toilet flange and the hallway floor
- ☐ Threshold or transition chosen for the doorway

10 Your notes

MEASUREMENTS · TILE CHOICES · QUESTIONS

07 Questions for your installer

- ☐ Are you covered by WSIB, and do you carry liability insurance?
- ☐ Which waterproofing system will you use?
- ☐ Who does demolition, and how is hidden damage handled?
- ☐ How will you check and fix the subfloor?
- ☐ Where will the tile cuts land? Can I see the layout?
- ☐ How will exposed edges be finished?
- ☐ Which grout, and does it need sealing?
- ☐ What is the schedule, including cure times?
- ☐ What does the written quote include and exclude?
- ☐ Can I see photos of jobs in progress, not just finished?

09 Living through it

- ☐ Only bathroom? Plan where to shower and that the toilet may be out for days
- ☐ Dust barriers, floor protection and covered vents
- ☐ Working hours, parking and water shut-offs agreed in advance
- ☐ Shower stays unused until grout and sealant have cured
- ☐ Glass may be installed after the rest is finished

Want a second pair of eyes on your plan?

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Plumbing, electrical, glass and other trades are done by licensed trades. Product makers' instructions and the Ontario Building Code govern your project; this checklist is a planning guide.