

Butte County Contractors Guide 2020

 PUBLICATIONS



The benefits of hiring
professional contractors 8

Accessing Building Services in Butte County During COVID-19

Have a question about your building project? Some County and City offices have modified access during COVID-19. The following contact information is current as of July 14, 2020.

Butte County Development Services

Due to the novel coronavirus (covid-19) the Butte county Development Services office will be closed to the public. Services will be available by phone or email.

Visit their website at www.butte-county.net/dds

By phone: 530.552.3700

Via email: dsbuilding@buttecounty.net – building division

dsplanning@buttecounty.net – planning division

dscodeenforcement@buttecounty.net – code enforcement division

City of Chico Building Department

City facilities, including City Hall where the Building Division is located,

are open to the public BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. This allows commerce to continue to occur, but also implements social distancing, as meetings are staggered. This effort allows the City to help mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19 from person to person. Call (530) 879-6700 to make an appointment for the Building Division. Some permitting services are available via the City's online Permit Service. Visit <https://www.ci.chico.ca.us/building-division>

City of Oroville

Community Development Department

1735 Montgomery Street

Oroville, CA 95965

Phone: (530) 538-2401

Fax: (530) 538-2426

Open for walk-ins until 5:00 p.m. Monday-Thursdays; Open until Noon on Fridays.

Planning Division email: planning@cityoforoville.org

Engineering Division email: engineering@cityoforoville.org

Building Division email: building@cityoforoville.org

Town of Paradise

For Rebuilding Guides, Permitting and Additional Information, visit <https://makeitparadise.org>. *Prior to submitting project(s) for plan check, it is recommend speaking with a representative at the Development Services Permit Center (located at the Building Resiliency Center, 6295 Skyway, Paradise) to determine what additional documentation, if any, may be required for your rebuild.* For more information about Rebuilding Paradise, see article in this supplement.

City of Biggs

Building Permits and Services

Building permits and services for

Biggs are provided by the Butte County Building Department and Butte County Department of Development Services. Their site provides online permit applications, parcel look up, building codes, contact information and many other resources.

www.buttecounty.net/dds

530-552-3700

City of Gridley

Building inspection services for Gridley are provided by the Butte County Department of Development Services. Their site provides online permit applications, parcel look up, building codes, contact information and many other resources.

www.buttecounty.net/dds

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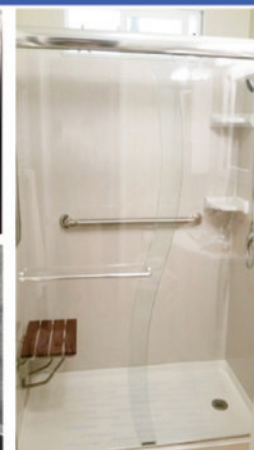
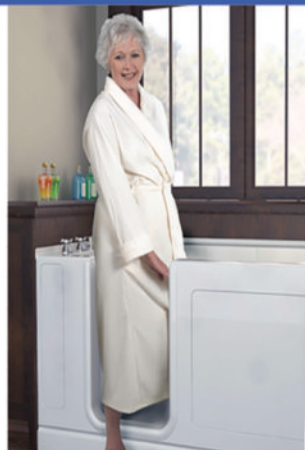
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Worksite Guidance During COVID-19

In an effort to support a safe, clean environment for workers, the California Department of Public Health and CalOSHA have developed an industry-specific document to provide guidance for the construction industry during COVID-19. The following excerpt from the guide outlines just some of these worksite guidelines. To access the full guide, which includes other important health and safety protocols, visit <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-construction.pdf> and <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/COVID-19-Infection-Prevention-in-Construction.pdf>.



Establish a written, worksite-specific COVID-19 prevention plan at every location, perform a comprehensive risk assessment of all work areas and work tasks, and designate a person at each establishment to implement the plan.

Incorporate the CDPH Face Covering Guidance into the Workplace Specific Plan and include a policy for handling exemptions.

Identify contact information for the local health department where the operation is located for communicating

information about COVID-19 outbreaks among workers or customers.

Train and communicate with workers and worker representatives on the plan and make the plan available to workers and their representatives.

Regularly evaluate the establishment for compliance with the plan and document and correct deficiencies identified.

Investigate any COVID-19 illness and determine if any work-related factors could have contributed to risk of infection. Update the plan as needed to prevent further cases.

Implement the necessary processes and protocols when a workplace has an outbreak, in accordance with CDPH guidelines.

Identify close contacts (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) of an infected worker and take steps to isolate COVID-19 positive worker(s) and close contacts.

Adhere to the guidelines below. Failure to do so could result in workplace illnesses that may cause operations to be temporarily closed or limited

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Quiet home noise with soundproofing

Many people want their homes to be comfortable, relaxing retreats. While much thought will be given to layout and decor, the noises in and around a house also can affect how enjoyable a space is or isn't.

Certain offenders are driving up the noise levels in homes. New building materials that are lighter than those used in the past can make it easier for noise to travel between rooms. In addition, open floor plans make it easy for noise to travel from room to room, while handheld personal devices can make rooms noisy. Homeowners who want more peace and quiet in their home can take the following steps.

Add more drywall

Homeowners may not be able to add walls of sturdy brick to block sounds, but they can add more drywall in noisy rooms. Consider adding more drywall to a library or reading nook. The home improvement resource HomeLogic notes that drywall can be used to isolate noisy rooms, such as those where kids practice playing musical instruments.

Beef up dense materials

Heavy curtains, fluffy furniture and thick carpets can make rooms quieter because they help absorb sound waves. Such items and materials also

can help prevent echoes. Bare walls and floors will only make sounds bounce around.

Seal holes and cracks

Noises from outside can sneak around gaps in windows, doors and siding. Making sure gaps are sealed will not only make a home more energy efficient, but also help block out some exterior noises.

Fix squeaky floors

Wood floors can shrink and expand, leading to movement and the development of squeaky areas.

By fixing squeaky floors, homeowners can reduce noise created when people walk through their homes.

Soundproofing a home can be a relatively easy and effective DIY project.



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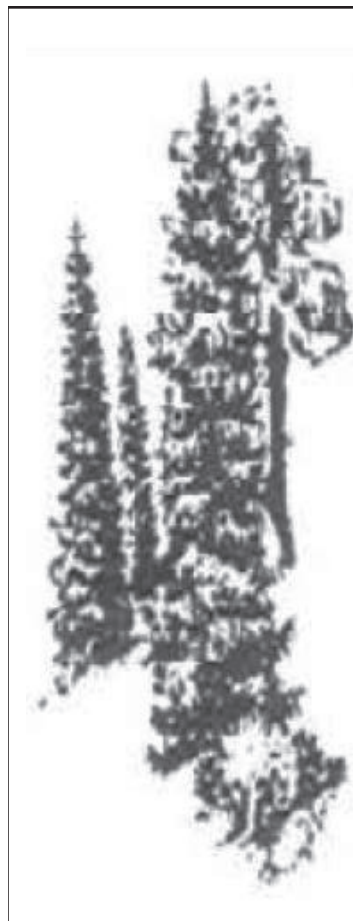
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Building Permits 101

Looking to build, remodel or improve something on your property? Making sure you're in compliance with permitting and code requirements is essential.

But first, what is a building permit? A building permit is an official approval issued by the local governmental agency that allows you or your contractor to proceed with a construction or remodeling project on your property. It is intended to ensure that the project intends to comply with local standards for land use, zoning, and construction. These standards are intended to ensure the safety of current and future owners and occupants and to provide enforcement of zoning and land use policies.

When Is a Building Permit Needed?

Not all renovation and home construction endeavors require a building permit. In many instances, basic replacements or repairs can be done by professional contractors or homeowners without applying for a permit. With that said, any project that involves additions or major changes to your home's structure or its mechanical

systems generally require you to apply for the appropriate permit from your local building department. If you're hiring a contractor to perform the work, he or she will usually handle the permit process for you, factoring in whatever the permit cost is to his/her bid. If you are doing the work yourself, it is your responsibility to apply for the permit. Be mindful that the building department in your city or county may require that some types of work be done only by licensed professionals.

The requirements for permits, and their costs, vary widely depending on where you live; the only way you can tell for sure if a permit is required is to call your local building office and describe the work you want to do. You'll find contact information for Butte County building departments in this issue.

The Building Permit Process

While not every community is the same, the process of obtaining a building permit if you plan to do the work yourself, generally goes something like this:

1. Call or stop by your local building office and describe your project. If a permit is required, an application form will be provided to you that outlines the requirements for applying for a building permit. Note that some jobs may require multiple permits. A major remodeling project, for example, could require an electrical, construction and plumbing permit.
2. Prepare the permit application, including whatever additional materials may be required. Construction projects may require drawings of the work you plan.
3. Submit the building permit application and pay whatever fees are required. The licensing office will issue you an official permit certificate.
4. As you begin work, post the building permit certificate as required.
5. At the designated points during the work, call the inspection office to arrange for an inspector to visit the worksite and review the quality of the work. If the inspector orders any changes to the work, complete these changes, and have the inspector return to review the work again.
6. Once the inspector approves the work, you no longer need to display the permit certificate.

Good luck on your project!

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When it can be smart to hire a painting pro

Few things can revitalize a home more readily than a fresh coat of paint.

Thanks in part to the affordability of paint and its ease of application, painting is something that even novice DIYers can typically handle. According to the marketing advice guru Brandon Gaille, it is estimated that residential interior paint only lasts around three years before it needs to be updated. Exterior paint can fade, chip and peel due to various environmental factors. As a result, many homes can likely use a fresh coat of paint in at least one room.

As DIY-friendly as painting can be, when attempting to paint the interior or exterior of their homes, homeowners may learn that some painting projects are best left to the professionals. Painting requires skill, patience and a knowledge of how various paints — including finishes for particular applications — will hold up. Novice painters may do more harm than good by dripping paint on ex-

pensive carpeting or floors or fail to recognize the nuances that indicate a spot-on painting job.

Professional painters have spent hours upon hours learning the ropes of what works — and what does not. Painters often understand that painstaking preparatory work is crucial to getting pristine finished results. Walls and ceilings must be properly repaired and prepared even before a base coat is applied.

Professional painters also have an eye for details. And because professional painters make a business out of doing interior and exterior surfaces, they understand which techniques can improve efficiency. That means a professional job can typically be completed much more quickly than a DIY project.

Even though some people think they'll save money by painting their own homes, that's not necessarily true. Professionals already have all the equipment necessary, unlike novices who may need to make repeated and potentially costly trips



to the hardware store for supplies. Plus, if mistakes happen, DIYers have to spend additional time and money fixing them.

Safety can be a large motivator for turning painting over to a pro. Navigating exterior areas or tall interior ceilings can be challenging and may require scaffolding or tall ladders DIYers do not have. Risk of falls or other injuries increase with lack of experience.

Painting can give a home a facelift, and often-times it is smart to turn the work over to professionals to ensure the job is done just right.

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The benefits of hiring professional contractors

The DIY movement has inspired many homeowners to tackle home repair and remodeling projects on their own. DIY projects can be rewarding, and many homeowners who have embraced the DIY movement have discovered talents they never before knew they had.

But no matter how simple popular home renovation television shows make remodeling projects appear, homeowners should know that such undertakings are far more difficult than they appear on television. Homeowners who overestimate their abilities and the time they have to complete projects can cost themselves substantial amounts of money. In fact, there are a variety of reasons homeowners might want to work with professional contractors when tackling home improvement projects.

Experience

A trial and error approach can work with various projects and problems. But applying such an approach to home improvement projects is risky and potentially dangerous, not to mention costly. Experienced professional contractors with strong track records (seek recommendations from friends or neighbors) won't have to go through trial and error and are therefore more likely than DIYers to complete a project on time and on budget.



Inspiration

One oft-overlooked benefit of working with professional contractors is the likelihood that they can draw up ideas for projects that homeowners might otherwise never have thought up on their own. Homeowners without specific ideas in mind can ask contractors to come up with various scenarios before committing to a particular one. Veteran contractors can draw on years of experience to create designs that DIYers might be incapable of coming up with and/or incapable of seeing through to completion.

Cost

Conventional wisdom suggests it's less expensive to do something yourself than to hire someone else to do it for you, but that's not necessarily true of home improvement projects. Labor

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CONTRACTORS From Page 8

costs typically account for a substantial amount of professionally contracted projects, but homeowners can cut those costs by volunteering to do some of the simpler tasks themselves. In addition, contractors often purchase materials at a much lower cost than individual homeowners because contractors buy in bulk. So while labor costs might be lower on DIY projects, the cost of materials can offset those savings.

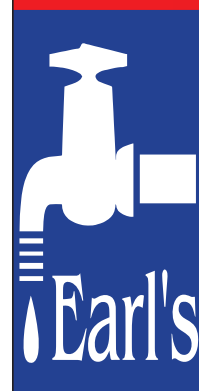
Resale value

Many homeowners renovate their homes with eyes on improving the resale value of those homes. But if homeowners want to showcase a newly remodeled kitchen when selling their homes, they should be prepared for prospective buyers to ask who worked on the project. Fearing potential problems down the road, some buyers might be put off by homes that were remodeled by DIYers and not professional contractors.



Renovating a home on your own can be a rewarding project for homeowners. But it's important that homeowners recognize the many benefits of working with professional contractors before making any final decisions with regard to who will tackle their next project.

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Tips for finding a home services provider



Homeowners who are good with their hands can tackle many minor home improvements on their own. However, more complicated projects often require the services of professional contractors to ensure the renovations are done right, completed on time and within budget.

Choosing a home services provider requires careful consideration on the part of homeowners. The wrong contractor can cost homeowners time and money, so homeowners must exercise due diligence when vetting contractors before going forward with a home improvement project.

Types of contractors

The Federal Trade Commission notes that the scope of a project may necessitate hiring various types of contractors. The more complex a project is, the more likely it is that homeowners will need to hire contractors who specialize in certain areas. Understanding the differences between contractors can help homeowners make informed decisions.

- **General contractor:** General contractors manage home improvement projects. This includes hiring subcontractors and supervising their work. General contractors also secure building permits and schedule inspections.
- **Specialty contractors:** Specialty contractors focus on specific areas of a project. For example, homeowners who are remodeling their kitchens may need new cabinets installed by a contractor who specializes in cabinets and cabinet installation. That contractor is a specialty contractor.
- **Designer or design/build contractor:** The FTC notes that these contractors both design and build projects.
- **Architects:** Architects design homes as well as any additions or major renovations to homes. Architects are often necessary when projects involve structural changes to existing homes.

Hiring a home services provider

Once homeowners determine which type of contractor they need, they can they begin researching local professionals.

- **Speak with neighbors, family and friends.** Neighbors, family members and friends who have worked with contractors in the past are great resources. Seek recommendations from people you trust, even asking to see completed projects if possible.
- **Utilize the internet.** Websites such as HomeAdvisor and Angie's List are free of charge and can be great resources when homeowners are looking for contractors. Each site includes reviews of contractors from past customers and contact information for local contractors.
- **Confirm qualifications.** The FTC advises homeowners to confirm contractors' licensing and qualifications before hiring anyone. Some areas may not require licensing, but many do. Homeowners can contact their local building department or consumer protection agency to determine the licensing requirements for their area.

Hiring a home services provider is a complicated process that can be made easier by homeowners who do their research and take the decision seriously.

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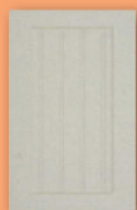


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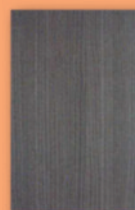
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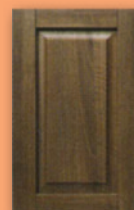
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Paradise Rebuilding Efforts in Full Swing



MakeItParadise.org: The Official Rebuild Site for the Town Of Paradise

Rebuilding efforts in the Town of Paradise are in full swing after the devastating Camp Fire of November, 2018. Homeowners and contractors alike will benefit from the ever-expanding library of resources, tips, news, and documents located at Makeitparadise.org, the official rebuild site for the town.

“The rebuild in Paradise continues in 2020 without a hitch. As of last week we had 240 homes rebuilt with certificates of occupancy issued, over 900 building permits issued, and more than 1,000 building permits in process. The Town has made quick work serving the rebuilding community more efficiently by setting appointments in the Building Resiliency Center. We are grateful for the support we receive from our local and regional partners in rebuilding Paradise – all of which enhance the tremendous

work private property owners are doing to rebuild their permanent homes, maintain standing structures, and care for their lots as we head into fire season. Day by day Paradise is coming back,” said Katie Simmons, Disaster Recovery Director for the Town of Paradise.

Stats at-a-glance:

As indicated on makeitparadise.org on July 14, 2020
Homes Rebuilt: 240

Building Permit Applications Received: 1076

Businesses Open: 190

Tree Removal Applications: 8579

Building Resiliency Center (BRC)

Located at: 6295 Skyway Rd Paradise, Ca 95969

REBUILDING From Page 12

The Building Resiliency Center is designed to serve as a one-stop-shop for residents who are rebuilding or even those who are considering rebuilding in the Town of Paradise. The Town's building department is now located inside the BRC, where residents can ask questions, apply for permits and get all the information needed to rebuild your home. The BRC also offers housing counseling services to help residents understand grants and other resources available for housing needs.

Services Provided @ BRC:

Town of Paradise Building Department
 Butte County Building Department
 Butte County Environmental Health
 Rebuild Advocates
 Tree ROE Collection Center
 Paradise Irrigation District
 Contractor's State Licensing Board
 PG&E
 Butte County Fire Safe Council

Note: Special Procedures for the Building Resilience Center during COVID-19:



The Building Resiliency Center will remain open to the public for building services; however, the Town will institute the following procedures to encourage social distancing:

For building questions, instead of visiting in person, call us at (530) 872-6291 x411 or email us at rebuildquestions@townofparadise.com.

For permitting, plan submittals or permit pickup, please call ahead and make an appointment at (530) 872-6291 x411.

Rebuild Advocates will be available by phone only at (530) 872-6291 x411

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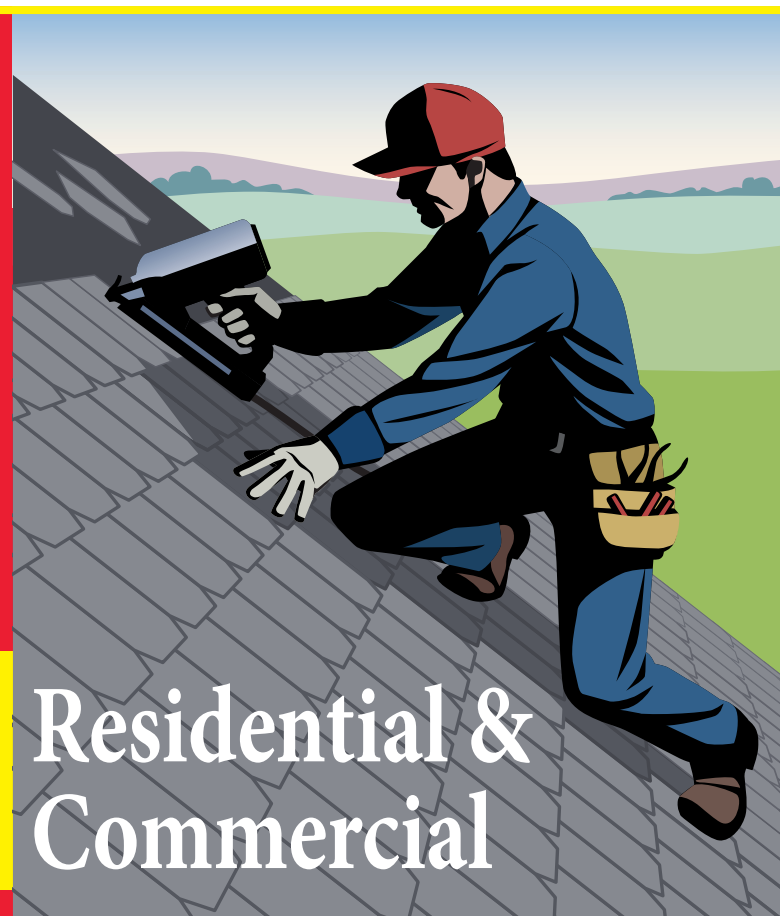
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Outdoor improvements that boost home value

Whether home improvement projects are design to improve the interior or exterior of a house, focusing on renovations that make the most financial sense can benefit homeowners in the long run. The right renovations can be assets if and when homeowners decide to sell their homes.

So how does one get started? First and foremost, speak to a local real estate agent who is knowledgeable about trends in the community. While a swimming pool may be something coveted in one area, it may impede sales in another. It also helps to study generalized trends and data from various home improvement industry analysts to guide upcoming projects.

The following outdoor projects are just a few renovations that tend to add value.

- **Fire pit:** A fire pit is a great place to gather most months of the year. Bob Vila and CBS news report that a fire pit realizes a 78 percent return on investment, or ROI.

- **Outdoor kitchen:** Many buyers are looking to utilize their yards as an extension of interior living areas. Cooking, dining and even watching TV outdoors is increasingly popular. Outdoor living areas can be custom designed and built. In addition, prefabricated modular units that require a much smaller commitment of time and money are available.

- **Patio:** Homeowners who do not already have a patio will find that adding one can increase a home's value. Patios help a home look neat, add useable space and may help a home to sell quickly. The experts at Space Wise, a division of Extra Space Storage, say that refinishing, repairing and building a new patio offers strong ROI.

- **Deck:** Deck can be as valuable as patios. A deck is another outdoor space that can be used for entertaining, dining and



more. Remodeling magazine's 2018 "Cost vs. Value" report indicates that an \$11,000 deck can add about \$9,000 in resale value to the home, recouping around 82 percent of the project's costs.

- **Door update:** Improve curb appeal with a new, high-end front door and garage doors. If that's too expensive, a good cleaning and new coat of paint can make an old door look brand new. These easy fixes can improve a home's look instantly.

- **New landscaping:** The National Association of Realtors says an outdoor makeover that includes well-thought out landscaping can net 105 percent ROI. Installing a walkway, adding stone planters, mulching, and planting shrubs are ideas to consider.

Many different outdoor projects can add value to a home.

The benefits of smart irrigation systems

The world has a water problem. Though the planet is 70 percent water, according to the World Bank, estimates indicate that with current population growth and water-management practices, the world will face a 40 percent shortfall between forecast demand and available supply of water by 2030.

Conservation is one of the ways the world can confront its water problem head-on, potentially preventing billions of people from facing a water scarcity in the years to come. One of the ways people in the developed world can help to conserve water is by employing smart irrigation systems in their homes.

Smart irrigation systems employ a similar type of smart technology many homeowners already rely on inside their homes. By employing such technology in their lawns

and gardens, homeowners can reap many of the same rewards they enjoy by using smart home systems inside their homes, all while benefitting the planet.

- **Some smart irrigation systems can recognize the local weather.** Many smart irrigation systems connect to the internet via homeowners' Wi-Fi. This allows the systems to take current weather into account before watering lawns and gardens. For example, a smart irrigation system can identify if it recently rained and cancel a scheduled watering. This helps homeowners avoid watering lawns and gardens when nature has already done the watering for them.

- **Smart irrigation systems can save home-**

See IRRIGATION, Page 17



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Must-haves for an amazing kitchen remodel

Kitchen remodels are among the most popular home renovation projects, whether they consist of swapping out cabinet hardware or doing major demolition.

Due to the sheer amount of time families spend in the kitchen, not to mention the number of tasks performed in this space, it is easy to see why Remodeling magazine consistently ranks kitchen renovations as projects that will enable homeowners to recoup a high percentage of their investments. In the magazine's 2018 "Cost vs. Value" report, midrange major kitchen remodels costing an average of \$63,829 recouped 59 percent of that investment.

When investing in a kitchen project, it is important to incorporate items that are coveted.

- **Deep, double sinks:** Having a double sink enables you to soak dishes in one side and then wash on the other. It also makes it easy to wash and prep produce for meals.

- **Kitchen island and bar stools:** Even though many meals are enjoyed around the table, there's something to be said for the convenience of a kitchen island and some well-placed bar stools for quick breakfasts or snacks.

- **Smart kitchen storage:** Work with a contractor to include storage solutions built into cabinetry and the pantry. Slide-out shelving, nooks for a paper towel roll and custom-designed areas to store stand mixers and other necessities can make kitchens more functional.

- **Outdoor access:** If possible, design a kitchen so it is easy to access the backyard via sliding doors. This can make outdoor entertaining or even coffee on the deck much easier.

- **Under-cabinet lighting:** Fixtures installed under cabinets provide both ambient lighting and task lighting. Such lighting makes it easier to see what you're working on as well, as even well-placed overhead lighting can fail to illuminate dark corners and spots on the counters.

- **Convenient warming drawer:** This appliance provides back-up to the oven. It's a slide-out drawer that can keep prepared foods out of the way and warm until they are ready to be served. This is particularly handy for holidays and other entertaining.

- **Beverage station:** Designate one area of the kitchen to beverages, such as coffee and tea. Or make the area an informal bar. This can limit traffic in the kitchen to a single area.

Kitchen remodels are exciting to envision, and several choices can make these high-traffic spaces even more coveted.



IRRIGATION

From Page 15

owners money. While smart irrigation systems can cost several thousand dollars, those costs can be recouped over time. Smart irrigation systems can detect when cooler weather has arrived, turning down water output as a result. That conserves water and saves homeowners money. When coupled with the savings they'll realize because their irrigation systems aren't water during rainy periods, homeowners will soon be on track to recouping their smart irrigation investments.

• **Smart irrigation systems conserve water.** People in the developed world are accustomed to having water at the ready. But many people across the globe enjoy no such luxury. For example, the organization Save the Water™ notes that the average American uses 2,000 gallons of water everyday, while the average African family uses just five gallons of water each day. Much of that disparity can be traced to a lack of access and scarcity of supply in the undeveloped world. By utilizing technology like smart irrigation systems, homeowners can help ensure there is sufficient water for everyone, regardless of where they live, in the coming decades.

Smart irrigation systems are sound investments that can help conserve water and benefit future generations.



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Essentials for a bathroom remodel

What began as a utilitarian space for personal sanitation has, in modern times, transformed into one of the most coveted rooms in the house. Bathrooms have become a place to relax and unwind, and new bathrooms are on the tops of many homeowners' wishlists.

Bathrooms can be as lavish as budgets allow. Wish lists can include everything from luxurious soaking tubs to rainfall showerheads to chaise lounges to televisions or home entertainment systems contained in the space. Those contemplating their own bathroom renovations may draw inspiration from the following features.

- **Hot water recirculation system:** Few things can be as disappointing as desiring a hot bath or shower only to find that the hot water tank has been drained. The home remodeling company Normandy Remodeling says that water recirculation systems provide on-demand hot water. In such systems, hot water may continuously run through the pipes or there may be a pump underneath a sink. Either way, one needn't wait for the water to warm up any longer.

- **Double undermount sinks:** Bathroom time is at a premium, especially when people must prepare and leave the house together. Rather than jockeying for position around a single sink, dual sinks enable more breathing room and time efficiency. Undermount sinks are easy to clean because there is no lip around where the sink meets the vanity, preventing the accumulation of grime and gunk.

- **Glass-free shower:** Soap scum and water deposits can form on shower doors, even for homeowners who are diligent with cleaning. A sizable shower prevents water spray and affords the ability to forgo glass doors or curtains, thereby cutting down on cleaning and making the room feel more modern.

- **Multihead shower:** When redoing the shower, account for various shower heads so that the water can cascade across the body more completely. This provides a spa experience at home.



- **Touchless faucets and soap dispensers:** These aren't just for public bathrooms anymore. Touchless faucets and dispensers are more sanitary and convenient.

- **Separate toilet room:** A shared bath almost necessitates this type of set-up. The toilet is housed inside its own small space and closed away from the rest of the bathroom. It's more private and convenient this way.

- **Heated flooring:** You need not worry about stepping out of a warm shower onto a cold floor when heated flooring is part of the equation. This option is available in various flooring materials as well.

Remodeling a bathroom boils down to certain coveted features that can really set a space apart.

Lighting is a key component of curb appeal

Curb appeal can affect prospective buyers' perception of a home. When addressing curb appeal, homeowners may be inclined to focus on features that are easily seen from the street during the day. But what can a homeowner do to improve on his or her home's nighttime aesthetic?

Outdoor lighting is one aspect of curb appeal that is often overlooked, advises the home improvement experts at The Spruce. Homeowners may fail to recognize the importance of how proper illumination can provide their homes with a warm glow and make it look beautiful after the sun has set. For example, think of how cozy and inviting neighborhoods appear during the holiday season when homes are strung with twinkling lights. Homeowners can replicate that look all year long with lighting elements.

Lighting for evening hours also helps maintain a safe environment for people who are visiting the property. Illuminating walkways and doorways provides a clearly visible and safe path to and from the home.

The following are a few ways to improve outdoor lighting.

- **Focus on architectural features.** Outdoor lighting can focus on the external features of the home's architectural style. Use light to draw attention to interesting gables, dramatic roof lines, dormers, or curved entryways.

- **Play up landscaping.** Stylish lighting can highlight trees, shrubs, pathways, gardens, and all of the elements of softscapes and hardscapes on a property. The lighting experts at Vernon Daniel Associates say that soft lighting can make homes

feel warm and cozy. Uplighting trees or other elements can add a dramatic effect.

- **Light up all doors.**

Make sure that doors, both entry and garage, are properly lit for ease of entry and egress from the home. Safety.com, a home and personal security resource, says a home burglary occurs every 15 seconds in the United States. Installing motion-activated lights or lights on timers can deter break-ins. Consider using home automation to control porch lights and other outdoor lights remotely, if necessary.

- **Create entertaining areas.** Outdoor lighting can be used to extend the hours residents can spend outside. This is great for entertaining and can be an excellent selling point.

Homeowners are urged not to overlook outdoor lighting as a vital part of their plan to improve curb appeal.



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Top 5 hottest home building trends

(MS) — These days, home trends are about more than good design and aesthetics — they're about creating spaces that reflect our values and are more comfortable and enjoyable to live in. From net-zero and net-positive construction to tiny minimalist homes, trends are all about your family's lifestyle.

Whether you're shopping for a new home, renovating your own or creating a new build from scratch, here are some of the biggest trends you need to know for inspiration.

Sustainable design: This one has been popular for a long time, but green design has evolved to be about much more than energy-efficient appliances and LED light bulbs. Now, it's all about making sure everything in your home reduces your carbon footprint and minimizes any impact on the environment.

To try the trend yourself, think big and get creative — install solar panels on your roof, choose building materials that don't require deforestation and upcycle old furniture for decorative elements instead of buying new.

Disaster resiliency: Climate change affects us in so many negative ways, and one of the top concerns is the increase in natural disasters. From wildfires that last for months to major floods that affect entire cities, we now need to prepare for the worst when building our homes.

Switching to disaster-resilient materials is an important first step. Many builders now prefer to use stronger, more energy-efficient materials like insulated concrete forms (ICFs) instead of more traditional materials like wood. For example, Nudura ICFs can withstand winds of up to 250 miles per hour (equivalent to an F4 tornado) and offer a fire protection rating of up to four hours.

Outdoor living: Many of us are now choosing to forgo getting a cottage or summer home and recreate the experience in our own backyards. This trend helps you make the most of your existing space and take full advantage of your yard or patio during the summer months.

You can design a full living space outside, complete with an outdoor television and comfy couches, as well as a kitchen and refrigerator for entertaining. Consider adding a fireplace or firepit to keep warm during cool summer nights and enjoy the outdoors through spring, fall and even winter if you're brave.



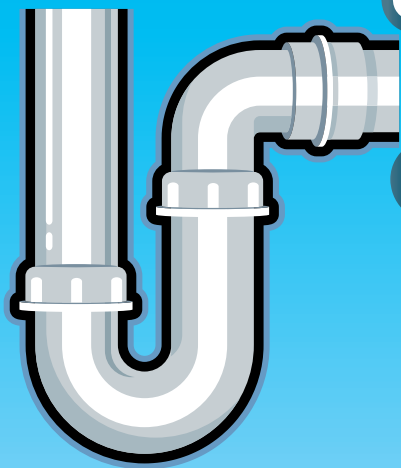
Home automation: This is another longstanding trend that shows no signs of slowing down. It has also evolved to encompass more of the home to make life even more comfortable and convenient. From an oven that can be turned on remotely to preheat, to skylights that can open and close automatically to create the perfect ambient temperature, there are more ways than ever to integrate smart home technology into your living space.

You can start small with voice assistant and smart light bulbs and work your way up to a total smart home system that includes home security, temperature controls and all your electronic devices.

Customization: You don't have to settle for what mass manufacturers decide to build, or what works for everyone else. Creating a home that's as unique as you are is the latest trend, with custom-built storage and personalized architectural features to make your space stand out.

You can even go as far as building a custom home that's suited to your family. Older home demolitions and purchasing land-only properties is becoming more common, allowing you to work with an architect to create exactly what you want with a new build.

Find more information about the benefits of building a home with ICFs at nudura.com.



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Time to replace old wiring

Old homes can be charming and contain architectural elements not often seen in many modern housing developments. But what older homes may have in design appeal, they may lack in updated features.

While cosmetic changes are not necessarily difficult, one area of concern in historic homes — and sometimes even in houses built 40 or 50 years ago — is archaic wiring. Wiring provides power to every room of the home. In today's electronics-driven society, electricity that works is an essential component of daily life. Over time, wiring can be compromised through simple aging, pest infiltration, weather, or other conditions. Deteriorated wiring can present a shock hazard and also a serious fire hazard, warn the home renovation experts at The Spruce. Furthermore, the home improvement site This Old House advises that the amperage of old wiring may not be able to meet the needs of the devices used in homes — overpowering the circuits. This can cause breaker blowouts and other problems, such as overheated wires that may spark and cause fires from within the wall.



Wiring often falls into the "out of sight, out of mind" category. Homeowners may make allowances for inadequate electrical systems, such as running extension cords or using multiplug connectors to increase their wiring capacity. However, they may not be diligently keeping on top of upgrades needed to stay safe. Confirming that a home's electrical system is safe is a necessary part of home maintenance.

For those who haven't already done so, schedule an inspection with a licensed electrician to go over the home's wiring. He or she can determine if any areas pose a safety risk and/or do not conform to local code requirements and the National Electrical Code. Failure to meet code can lead to difficulty obtaining permits to make other home renovations, or difficulty selling a home later on.

The electrician can also go over improvements that can improve safety and function. Additional outlets, including GFCI outlets in kitchens and bathrooms, may be part of the plan, as well as rewiring a fuse box or circuit panel to allow for better flow of power around the house. Frayed wiring or underinsulated wiring also may need to be replaced.

Owners of old homes should recognize possible electrical system dangers that require attention. Plus, considering electrical codes change quite frequently, it is always in a homeowner's best interest to work with a qualified electrician to keep wiring inspected and up to date.

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