YOUR HOME. YOUR PRIORITIES. YOUR PLAN.

Renovating Your Home?

10 Things to Get Right Before You Start

Plan your budget, avoid costly surprises, and make confident renovation decisions.

A better renovation starts with a clearer plan.

You know how you want your home to feel. This guide helps you turn that vision into practical decisions before you commit to a contractor, order materials, or begin demolition.

INSIDE: 10 planning essentials + a printable readiness checklist

Prepared by Renovation by RepairFind

01 / DEFINE THE PROJECT

Know what you are building toward

01 Decide what your home needs to do better

Start with the problem, not the finishes. Is your kitchen cramped? Is storage missing? Does the bathroom need to be easier to use? Separate must-haves from nice-to-haves so every decision supports your daily life.

Before you start: Write your top three priorities and one sentence describing what a successful renovation will change.

02 Set a complete budget, including a reserve

Look beyond the main construction price. Include design, materials, labour, applicable taxes, delivery, disposal and temporary living costs. Keep a separate reserve for unforeseen work; agree on its size after discussing your home and scope with your contractor.

Before you start: Record your maximum total spend, planned project cost and untouched contingency. Ask what is excluded from each quote.

03 Write down exactly what is included

A shared vision is not a detailed scope. List the rooms, demolition, repairs, installations, finishes and cleanup. Identify what stays, what moves and who supplies each item. Unclear details make quotes harder to compare.

Before you start: Create one scope document and give the same version to every contractor quoting the work.

02 / CHOOSE WITH CLARITY

Get the details into writing

04 Compare quotes on the same basis

A lower total may leave out work another quote includes. Compare quantities, product specifications, allowances, exclusions and cleanup. An allowance is a budget placeholder: ask how the final selection will change the price.

Before you start: Ask each contractor: "What could increase this price, and which items are still allowances?"

05 Choose a team you can communicate with

Ask for examples of similar projects and recent references. Discuss who will supervise the job, which trades will attend and how questions will be answered. Request relevant insurance and qualification details for the proposed work.

Before you start: Speak with references about communication, changes, workmanship and how issues were resolved.

06 Agree on scope, payments and changes

Review a written agreement covering the scope, price basis, payment milestones, estimated schedule, exclusions and how deficiencies will be addressed. Set a process for changes that records the added or reduced cost and schedule impact before work proceeds.

Before you start: Ask: "How will you document a change, and how do I approve it?" Keep copies of decisions, invoices and payments.

03 / PREPARE FOR THE WORK

Make the start less stressful

07 Confirm approvals before setting a start date

Ask your municipality and contractor which approvals, permits and inspections apply. If your home is in a strata, check its renovation process as well. Assign responsibility for applications and coordination.

Before you start: Confirm the required approvals and who will obtain them before scheduling affected work.

08 Look beyond what you can see

New finishes can hide existing problems. Ask what should be assessed before pricing is finalized, including moisture, wiring, plumbing and structure. Agree on how concealed issues or suspect materials will be assessed if uncovered.

Before you start: Ask: "What is still unknown, and what happens if demolition reveals a problem?"

09 Finalize selections and check delivery dates

Cabinets, fixtures and appliances affect measurements and installation timing. Confirm models, dimensions, finishes and availability before orders. Ask how substitutions or late deliveries would affect the sequence of work.

Before you start: Keep a selection list showing each item, who orders it, the decision deadline and expected arrival.

10 Plan daily life and the final handover

Agree on work hours, access, dust protection, cleanup and any kitchen or bathroom downtime. Plan for children and pets. Before completion, arrange a walkthrough, a written deficiencies list and delivery of care and warranty information.

Before you start: Name your main contact and agree on updates, completion checks and follow-up arrangements.

YOUR PRINTABLE PLANNING SHEET

Ready to take the next step?

- ☐ My top priorities are clear.
- ☐ My budget includes a separate contingency.
- ☐ My written scope shows inclusions and exclusions.
- ☐ I have compared quotes and clarified allowances.
- ☐ I have checked relevant experience and references.
- ☐ Scope, payments and change approvals are documented.
- ☐ Approval and inspection responsibilities are confirmed.
- ☐ Unknown conditions and next steps have been discussed.
- ☐ Selections, ordering responsibilities and timing are clear.
- ☐ Daily routines, updates and the final walkthrough are planned.

My three must-haves:

My total budget / contingency:

My preferred timing:

Questions I still need answered:

Let's talk about your renovation.

Share your priorities, budget range and preferred timing with Renovation by RepairFind. Reply to the message or email that brought you this guide to start the conversation.

A planning resource. Confirm requirements and project details for your own home.