



A New Kitchen

A kitchen renovation can be one of the most exciting and important changes you make to your home. A well-designed kitchen will give you enjoyment and efficient work space for years, even decades. Kitchen renovations can involve a significant investment, so you want to make sure you do it right.

Begin by visiting building suppliers, retail outlets and kitchen show rooms to find out what's available and get an idea of prices. However, kitchen renovations go beyond cabinetry and appliances. Talk with a professional renovation contractor in the early stages of planning to get a clear sense of the full scope of the work involved. Then you'll be in a good position to make informed decisions and choices. Here are some of the issues you and your renovator will want to discuss.

What do you want to accomplish? A simple-sounding question, but one that your renovator needs to understand in order to give you the best advice. Do you need more storage and work space? A new updated look? Better traffic flow? A quiet, bright morning breakfast spot? What bothers you about your existing kitchen? Often, renovators will ask you to describe your daily routine to determine the best design solutions to achieve your objectives, in and around the kitchen area.

Do you really need a larger work area? The renovator will help you to assess your existing space. Older kitchens are often poorly laid out, with wasted space in corner cabinets, inefficient shelving and small counters with inadequate work space. Can you gain the space you want from a more efficient layout? Can you run cupboards to the ceiling for storing seldom-used items? Would bigger windows or glass doors to the outside help to open up the area? When more space is needed, can you relocate a small bathroom or closet to another area of the home, or move a wall in a rarely used dining room?

Do you need help with design? It's often difficult to see beyond what you already have, and you may not be aware of all the possibilities. Kitchen design has evolved a great deal in the past 10 to 15 years. Renovators can provide lots of ideas and suggest things you may never have considered. They may also recommend that you speak with a kitchen designer.

What mechanical work is involved? Typically, a complete kitchen renovation involves three stages: 1) preparing the room, 2) installing the cabinets and 3) completing the job - tiles, floor cover, trim, under-cabinet lights and so on.

During the first stage, your kitchen is dismantled and structural work - such as stripping and moving walls, installing windows and doors, drywalling, and flooring - is done. Electrical work may entail new wires, split receptacles and separate circuits for each appliance to conform to building codes. Your electrical panel may need upgrading as well.

Changing your kitchen layout may also mean moving the plumbing. Your renovator may suggest replacing old or corroded supply pipes to ensure good water pressure.

How long will I be without a kitchen? The work schedule depends on the scale of the project. A complete kitchen renovation typically takes about three to four weeks, longer if you are adding space or doing extensive renovations in adjoining areas. Your renovator will help you set up temporary kitchen facilities elsewhere in the house.

When should I begin to choose products? Experienced renovators strongly suggest that you don't make a single purchase until you have decided on the entire style and colour scheme. Get samples from suppliers (e.g., cabinets, counters, faucets, tiles, flooring) and look at them together to make sure that everything is matched and coordinated for the look you want.

Finally, the most important advice renovator's offer is: Don't be in a hurry. You will be using your kitchen every single day for years to come. This is your opportunity to do it right, so take your time. Do your homework, consult with professional renovators, and you are off to a good start.

Text provided by the CHBA and CMHC.

Your one step to a **successful** renovation!

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