

## Neighbour Etiquette: Renovations

If planning a renovation is in your future, don't forget to also plan on how you will maintain neighbourly relations. Here are some tips to help you avoid ruffling your neighbour's feathers:

- Communicate with your neighbours *before* you begin renovations and inform them about the work you plan on doing, the start and end dates, and if there will be any noise or limited access to shared space.
- To foster good relationships, offer gestures of goodwill to your neighbours like helping them with a task or inviting them over for dinner to promote open communication.
- Give your neighbours the contact information of someone on your renovation team if they have any questions or concerns.
- Follow local noise by-laws.
- Ensure that the cleanliness of your work site is maintained. If you have a skip bin, choose the right size so garbage doesn't spill over, and check if there are local regulations about where you can place it.



- Review local regulations regarding the disposal of hazardous waste and construction materials and ensure that your contractor is aware of this.
- Post any necessary building permits before renovating, and ensure your project complies with local zoning regulations.

With a little advance consideration for your renovation, you can minimize your chance of conflict and misunderstanding with your neighbours.



## To Keep or Not to Keep: Popcorn Ceilings

When you think of a modern-day ceiling, popcorn ceilings aren't likely what comes to mind, but they still exist in many older homes and condos and have their pros and cons.

To start with the positive, popcorn ceilings help to **conceal flaws** and unevenness, as well as **help to block sound**.

Some of the drawbacks are that they are generally seen as outdated or a potential maintenance headache, which could influence a buyer's decision. The most important drawback however is that **if your home has popcorn ceilings, it may contain asbestos**. Typically, if left undisturbed, it's relatively harmless, but the older your home, the more chance it will crumble, especially if you try to clean it. Also, keep in mind that if you live in an area prone to jarring natural disasters or are planning a renovation, you're at a higher risk of disturbing the ceiling.

So, if you have a home with popcorn ceilings **consider testing it for asbestos** and removing it if necessary. Removal should be performed by a trained and accredited professional.

Another option that may be more cost-effective is to encase the ceiling. Encasement involves covering the ceiling with new ceiling panels, to prevent it from producing toxic dust. This should be performed by a contractor who knows how to safely encase asbestos.

## Going Green: Tips for Eco-Friendly Renos

If you are planning a reno, why not make it an eco-friendly one? Not only will you help fight climate change, you can also help cut your energy costs. It's a win-win. Here are some tips to consider when planning an eco-friendly reno:

- Have an energy audit done to find out where your home is losing energy the most, so you will know which tasks you should prioritize.
- Choose the best quality products and materials you can afford to avoid high maintenance costs, lower efficiency, or having to replace them more often. The most expensive option doesn't necessarily mean it's the best, so do thorough research. Look for recognized industry standards like ENERGY STAR® for appliances and Green Seal® for construction products.
- Hire a reputable and knowledgeable contractor who is experienced with eco-friendly renovations. Check relevant references and do your due diligence. Consider one that is LEED-certified.
- Check online or with your contractor to find out if you qualify for any incentives and rebates.
- Ask your contractor if anything can be repurposed or refurbished during the renovation process to minimize



landfill waste and reduce carbon emissions.

Even if you don't do a complete eco-renov, small changes like switching to LED lighting, installing a smart thermostat, and low-flow faucets and showerheads can make a positive difference to your wallet and the environment.