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"We're dedicated to your service!"



CABINET MEETING

When it comes to increasing the value of your home, modernizing a kitchen can return 80 percent to 130 percent of your investment, according to the National Kitchen and Bath Association. But many homeowners think improving the kitchen has to come with a hefty price tag. Not necessarily.

Cabinets are often the first thing people notice about a kitchen. Cabinets are also one of the easiest and most affordable kitchen features to update. And in most cases, you don't need to replace them. Just take a close look at your existing cabinet doors. Are they beyond repair, or do they still look good, but just a little outdated?

If they're still in good shape, simply sanding and applying a fresh coat of paint can make a huge difference. Take everything out of the cabinets and scrub them with a cleaner. Lightly sand down the wax, veneer, polish or previous paint, then fix any cracks or breaks with putty. Brush on primer paint and add any paint color, pattern or stencil you'd like.

New hardware can also add flair to otherwise outdated cabinets. Cabinet knobs, pulls and hinges come in all shapes and sizes, including antique copper, iron, aged bronze, polished brass, glass, stainless steel and more. But before purchasing any new hardware, carefully measure your existing hardware. Jot down sizes and the spaces between screws, which will eliminate the need to drill new holes in the cabinets.

If replacement is the only option, modular cabinets, available at most home improvement stores, can be an affordable alternative. You can save even more money if you install them yourself.

Source: National Kitchen and Bath Association

Pipe Dreams

Flooded basements, frozen pipes and added expense — winter can be a homeowner's worst time of year. Take the following precautions to prepare your plumbing before the season really hits:

- 1 Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses. Once the hose is removed, water can drain from the pipe, preventing water from freezing inside it and bursting the pipe. This also includes swimming pool and water sprinkler supply lines. Don't add antifreeze. It can be harmful to the pipes and the environment.
- 2 Insulate all pipes and faucets with a pipe sleeve or heat cable, which are available at most hardware or building supply stores. Carefully wrap each pipe exposed to unheated areas, paying special attention to joints. Newspaper can even provide some protection to exposed pipes that aren't in areas of prolonged, extreme cold.
- 3 Seal off access doors, vents and cracks. Cold air seeping in can freeze exposed pipes and plumbing.
- 4 Know the location of your master shutoff valve, which turns off the water for the house. In case of flooding, you can quickly shut down the water supply and prevent further damage.
- 5 Remember to leave the heat on in your home, no lower than 55 degrees, if you travel during cold weather.



Source: www.redcross.org, www.drinktap.org



fast fact >> >> >>

The number of places in the United States named after the star of Thanksgiving dinner: three. Turkey, Texas, is the most populous, with 496 residents, followed by Turkey Creek, La. (357) and Turkey, N.C. (267).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



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Good on Paper

There's so much to consider when doing construction or renovating your home, from picking the right contractor and the best materials to managing costs and making design decisions. But don't forget one very important detail: building permits.

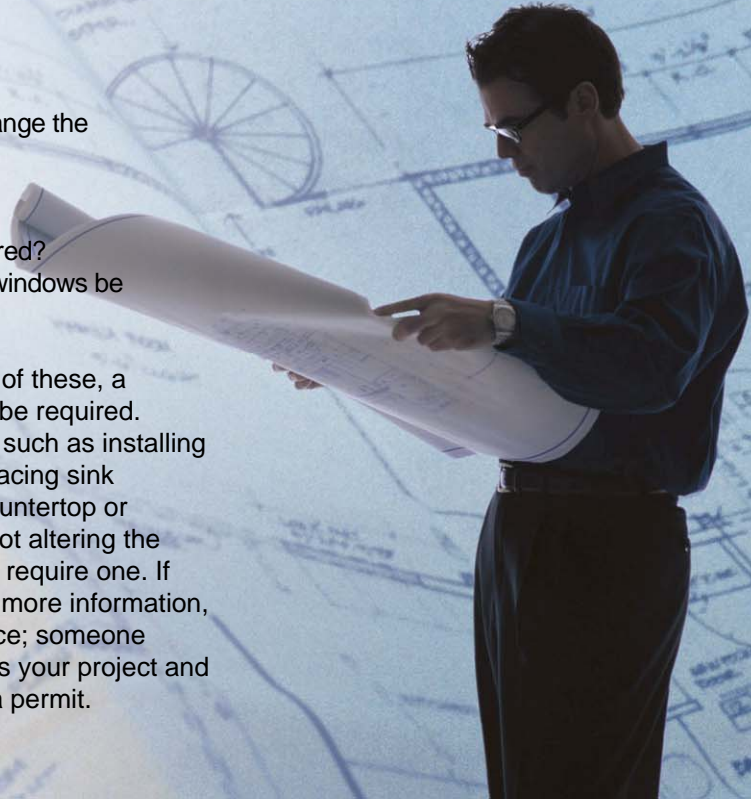
Whether you need to obtain one depends on your locality and the type of work you'd like to do to your home, but in many cases, you risk fines, penalties or additional construction costs if you don't get one. Selling your house might also be more difficult if a building official determines you remodeled without a permit and demands you bring it up to code.

How do you know if you need a permit for your project? Before beginning a project, ask yourself these questions:

- Will my remodeling change the footprint of the house?
- Will I have to move a load-bearing wall?
- Will the roofline be altered?
- Will any new doors or windows be constructed?

If you answer yes to any of these, a building permit will likely be required. Other aesthetic projects, such as installing new floor coverings, replacing sink hardware, changing a countertop or replacing windows, but not altering the structure, don't generally require one. If you're uncertain or need more information, call your local permit office; someone there will help you assess your project and determine if you'll need a permit.

Source: *Wall Street Journal*



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* DID YOU KNOW

The top five biggest renovating mistakes are: avoiding permits, setting an unrealistic budget, hiring the wrong contractor, taking on more than you can handle and overbuilding for your neighborhood.

Source: HGTV



Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home? Please mention my name.

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