

Renovation Change-Order Prevention Checklist

Step 1: Clarify Your Vision

- ☐ Define the **general scope of work** — even a rough idea helps.
- ☐ Discuss project goals as a household so everyone is aligned before starting. You don't have to know all the details, that's what we're here to help you with.
- ☐ Think about how you use your space today versus how you want to use it in the **future**. Consider your stage of life, future stages and how your family needs will change as time goes on.
- ☐ Sketch or describe a **rough layout** of what you envision. Also discuss your non-negotiables for the project while being realistic and flexible.
- ☐ Decide on the **desired level of finish** (fixtures, cabinetry, paint, flooring).
- ☐ Establish a **rough budget range** for your investment.

Step 2: Shortlist and Compare Contractors

- ☐ Select 3 comparable contractors for estimates — avoid mixing handymen, entry-level builders, and experienced firms in together.
- ☐ Vet contractors by checking: transparent pricing and clear change-order processes, portfolio of similar projects, online reviews and testimonials, warranty policies and service follow-up.
- ☐ Ask for recent client references and call them directly.
- ☐ Confirm contractors perform a pre-project walkthrough with trades to identify risks before the project starts. We typically do our walk-throughs 3-5 weeks before a project starts so that we can revise documents, schedules and receive updated pricing based on the walkthrough.

Step 3: Before Signing the Contract

- ☐ Read and confirm every line item in the quote and contract.
- ☐ Ensure all materials, models, and finishes are listed clearly.
- ☐ Review allowances for items not yet finalized.
- ☐ Clarify how surprises and scope changes will be handled.
- ☐ Establish payment terms and ask about the schedule. At Nuvo Construction, we build detailed schedules once we have received formal approval for a project.
- ☐ Confirm project start date and estimated duration.
- ☐ Agree on communication frequency (e.g., site visits, weekly updates).

Step 4: During Construction

- ☐ Attend regular site check-ins with your project supervisor or discuss your project regularly if you can't be on site.
- ☐ Use JobTread (Nuvo's project management platform) to track approvals, selections, and change orders in one place.
- ☐ Ensure all changes are documented in writing — even zero-dollar change orders should be formalized for clarity.
- ☐ Request progress photos and notes if you can't be on-site.
- ☐ Keep communication centralized — use consistent email threads or the project platform, not scattered texts and new threads.
- ☐ Make timely payments to avoid delays to your project.

Pro Tips for Success

- ❖ Complete all design and selections before construction starts to avoid repeated pricing rounds.
- ❖ Ask detailed questions at the pre-construction walkthrough and throughout the project — collaboration reduces surprises.
- ❖ Confirm when your rough in and final walkthroughs will occur
- ❖ Never approve a verbal change — always request documentation.
- ❖ Discuss how much contingency you should be planning for with your contractor — a good rule of thumb is 5-10% for simple projects. If you have a complicated project then you might want to do some additional contingency planning.