



FREE HOMEOWNER PLANNING GUIDE

Bathroom Remodeling Guide

Plan the room from the waterproofing outward, with clear decisions about layout, storage, ventilation, comfort, and care.

USE THIS FOR

Better questions, clearer scope and more useful early conversations.

KEEP IN MIND

Every property, permit path and existing condition requires project-specific verification.

For homeowners updating a powder room, family bath, guest bath, or primary suite, including projects with new showers, tubs, tile, plumbing locations, heated floors, or accessibility goals.



START WITH PURPOSE

Good planning makes the unknowns visible.

How to use this guide

A bathroom concentrates water, electricity, ventilation, storage, and daily routines into a small room. Good work depends on the parts you will not see: sound framing, correct slopes, compatible substrates and waterproofing, tested plumbing, useful blocking, and ventilation. Finish choices should support those fundamentals. Use this guide to prepare for a useful conversation, not to diagnose the house from a distance. Write down assumptions as assumptions. When new information changes the plan, ask for the scope, cost, and schedule effect in writing before work continues whenever practical.

Six principles to carry through the project

- | | |
|--|--|
| 01 Define the result before the products. A strong brief describes what daily life should improve, what must remain, and which compromises are acceptable. | 02 Compare scopes, not just totals. Two proposals can look similar while assigning demolition, permits, protection, selections, restoration, and unknowns very differently. |
| 03 Make decisions in dependency order. Layout and performance choices come before finishes; products that affect rough-in or fabrication must be known before those steps are released. | 04 Treat unknowns honestly. Visible conditions, reasonable expectations, and concealed possibilities are different categories. Investigation can reduce uncertainty, but some conditions remain unknowable until opening. |
| 05 Protect quality beneath the finish. Structure, water control, fire and life safety, utility work, ventilation, and manufacturer requirements should not be traded away for a cosmetic upgrade. | 06 Keep one current record. Consolidated decisions, drawings, selections, questions, approvals, and changes help the homeowner and every trade work from the same information. |

Planning boundary: This document supports early discussion and decision-making. It is not a site assessment, permit decision, engineering review, estimate, contract, or substitute for manufacturer instructions.

THE PROJECT PATH

Decisions should create useful outputs.

01 Routine, users, and longevity

Map morning and evening use, simultaneous users, bathing preferences, grooming, towels, cleaning, storage, children, guests, and future mobility needs.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Choose the room's primary users and rank shower, tub, vanity, toilet, storage, and accessibility priorities.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

A use brief with comfort, maintenance, and long-term needs.

02 Condition and layout review

Measure the room and inspect visible ventilation, plumbing, floor stiffness, water damage, windows, doors, electrical, and adjacent spaces. Determine whether layout changes are practical.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Decide what to keep, relocate, enlarge, or investigate.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

Existing-condition notes, measured plan, and layout constraints.

03 Wet-area and systems planning

Coordinate drain and valve locations, hot-water demand, shower entry, pan, bench, niche, glass, blocking, ventilation, lighting, receptacles, and heated floor if used.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Approve wet-area layout and fixture specifications before rough work.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

Coordinated plumbing and electrical plan, waterproofing concept, and blocking schedule.

04 Materials and details

Select tile, grout, trim profiles, vanity, counter, sink, faucet, toilet, tub, accessories, glass, flooring, paint, hardware, and lighting. Check cleaning and maintenance expectations.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Approve samples, layouts, edge details, accessory locations, and owner-supplied products.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

Finish schedule, tile elevations or layout notes, and selection log.

THE PROJECT PATH

Decisions should create useful outputs.

05 Scope, pricing, and readiness

Define protection, demolition, repairs, rough trades, permits, inspections, waterproofing, tile, cabinetry, glass, finishes, testing, and alternate bathroom arrangements.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Confirm scope boundaries, allowances, lead times, and household plan during downtime.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

Written proposal, procurement status, permit plan, and construction sequence.

06 Construction and wet-area hold points

Complete demolition, repair structure, rough plumbing and electrical, install backing and substrates, perform required inspections or tests, document waterproofing, then tile and finish.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Review discoveries and approve any change before dependent work proceeds.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

Verified substrate, documented concealed work, completed finishes, and installed fixtures.

07 Testing, care, and handoff

Operate every fixture and control, check drainage and fan function, inspect grout, sealant, glass, doors, hardware, heat, and accessories, then review curing and cleaning.

HOMEOWNER DECISION

Confirm punch completion and understand routine maintenance.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

Ready-to-use bathroom, manuals, care guidance, finish records, and closeout documents.

Before construction is released

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Current drawings and written scope agree | ☐ Permit, inspection, and consultant paths are identified |
| ☐ Approval roles and communication channel are clear | ☐ Long-lead status and decision dates are visible |
| ☐ Critical selections and owner-supplied items are documented | ☐ Site logistics, protection, and change approval are understood |

SCOPE, COST AND TIME

Compare what is included—not just the total.

Demolition and conditions

- ☐ Protection, access, defined removal, plumbing isolation, debris, and temporary bathroom plan
- ☐ Framing, subfloor, floor stiffness, walls, ceiling, rot, moisture, and prior-work concerns
- ☐ Window, door, ventilation path, plumbing routes, electrical capacity, and structural questions

Wet-area build

- ☐ Drain, supply, valve, diverter, tub, shower pan, curb or entry, slopes, and flood testing as applicable
- ☐ Blocking, substrate, waterproofing system, niches, benches, penetrations, tile, grout, and sealant
- ☐ Glass dimensions and hardware, ventilation, lighting, receptacles, heat, and alarms where applicable

Fixtures and finish

- ☐ Vanity, counter, sink, faucet, toilet, accessories, mirrors, storage, flooring, drywall, paint, and trim
- ☐ Owner-supplied product responsibilities, lead times, installation requirements, and warranties
- ☐ Testing, cleaning, cure times, care instructions, spare material, permits, and closeout

What commonly moves budget or schedule

Layout and plumbing movement

Changing fixture locations can affect framing, drains, vents, supply, ceilings below, and inspection scope.

Shower design

Size, entry, pan, drains, benches, niches, multiple outlets, glass, and tile format increase detailing and coordination.

Waterproofing and substrate repair

Wet-area performance depends on a complete compatible system and sound framing and surfaces.

Tile complexity

Material variability, pattern, layout, cuts, edges, niches, grout joints, and curing influence labor and duration.

Custom glass and fabrication

Final dimensions usually follow tile, so fabrication creates an honest gap in the sequence.

Electrical and comfort features

Heated floors, towel warmers, lighted mirrors, ventilation, and added circuits require early coordination.

Product availability

Valves, trims, tubs, vanities, tile lots, and glass hardware can hold work if specifications arrive late.

One-bathroom occupancy

Temporary facilities, daily access, and sequencing become critical when the household has no backup bathroom.

BEFORE WORK BEGINS

Prepare the household and the decision path.

Homeowner preparation

- ☐ Choose one or two household decision-makers and agree on how approvals will be given.
- ☐ Create a short priority list: must solve, would like, and can wait. Use it when scope or budget choices compete.
- ☐ Gather surveys, plans, past permits, product records, repair history, and any photos of earlier work.
- ☐ Remove valuables and fragile items; discuss furniture, artwork, window coverings, and stored belongings before mobilization.
- ☐ Plan for children, pets, parking, deliveries, work hours, bathroom access, and any needed temporary kitchen or living setup.
- ☐ Tell the team about alarms, gates, neighbors, HOA rules, home-office hours, allergies, or access restrictions.
- ☐ Keep project decisions in the agreed system rather than splitting them across texts, calls, and side conversations.
- ☐ Expect some disruption. Decide in advance when you need notice for noisy work or utility shutoffs.
- ☐ Plan where the household will bathe and use the toilet during shutdowns; discuss limits before work starts.
- ☐ Place accessories on the plan before walls close so needed blocking can be installed and photographed.

Questions worth asking

- 01** Who will be the day-to-day contact, and how often will we receive progress updates?
- 02** What is included, excluded, allowed for, owner-supplied, or still awaiting a decision?
- 03** Which drawings, engineering, permits, inspections, or specialist reviews are likely to be required?
- 04** How will concealed conditions be documented, priced, approved, and scheduled before added work begins?
- 05** Which selections have long lead times, and what are the decision deadlines?
- 06** How will occupied areas, pets, children, furnishings, landscaping, and daily access be protected?
- 07** How are schedule changes communicated, and what owner decisions could affect the critical path?
- 08** What quality checks occur before framing, waterproofing, wiring, plumbing, or other concealed work is covered?
- 09** Who coordinates trade partners and confirms that their work is ready for the next trade?
- 10** What permits, manuals, warranties, finish records, and maintenance guidance will be provided at handoff?
- 11** Which waterproofing system is specified, and who verifies it before tile?
- 12** How are shower slope, drain performance, ventilation, and plumbing tested before handoff?

PAUSE, VERIFY AND FINISH WELL

Quality includes what happens before and after the visible work.

Red flags and unresolved unknowns

- ☐ A price presented as final before the existing conditions, design, selections, and scope boundaries are understood.
- ☐ A proposal that omits protection, demolition disposal, permits, supervision, finish restoration, or final cleanup.
- ☐ Pressure to start demolition while drawings, key selections, or responsibility for open items remain unclear.
- ☐ Verbal changes with no written description of added scope, price, and schedule effect.
- ☐ No clear plan for dust, noise, temporary utility interruptions, weather exposure, or safe homeowner access.
- ☐ Assurances that hidden areas are fine without investigation, documentation, or an appropriate contingency plan.
- ☐ Products chosen for appearance without checking substrate, exposure, maintenance, installation, or warranty requirements.
- ☐ No defined inspection hold points before important concealed work is covered.
- ☐ Waterproofing described only as tile, grout, or a vague coating rather than a complete compatible assembly.
- ☐ Accessory and glass decisions postponed until after blocking, tile layout, or valve locations are fixed.

Closeout and handoff

- ☐ Walk every work area in good light and record remaining items in one shared punch list.
- ☐ Confirm that required final inspections and permit signoffs are complete or that any open item is clearly assigned.
- ☐ Operate doors, drawers, windows, fixtures, lights, fans, controls, appliances, and safety devices included in the work.
- ☐ Review cleaning, curing, ventilation, seasonal adjustment, and maintenance instructions before normal use.
- ☐ Collect approved plans, permits, inspection records, manuals, warranties, finish schedules, paint colors, and spare materials.
- ☐ Photograph shutoffs, access panels, concealed blocking, and key rough-in locations when documentation is available.
- ☐ Confirm the final change-order record, owner-supplied item status, and any remaining delivery or service appointment.
- ☐ Check that debris, temporary protection, keys, access codes, and contractor-owned materials have been addressed.
- ☐ Understand who to contact for a question, warranty concern, or urgent issue after completion.
- ☐ Store the closeout package with the home's permanent records for maintenance and future resale.

Professional verification: Bathroom work carries significant water, slip, electrical, plumbing, ventilation, and concealed-damage risks. Follow approved documents and product instructions, use qualified or licensed professionals as required, and obtain local permits and inspections. Accessibility details should be reviewed for the specific user's needs.

Start with an honest conversation.

Start with who uses the room and what must stay dry, easy, and comfortable for years. Ideal Construction & Renovation can help define the wet-area assembly, systems, selections, and finish