



## *Homeowner's Guide*

### **Preparing YOUR Home for Construction**



# **13 Tips to Help Prepare YOUR Home for Construction**

You have your plan in hand, you've hired a contractor, and now the day for beginning your remodeling project is quickly approaching. You need to clear the kitchen and organize the contents. If this seems overwhelming, follow the steps below to help simplify the process and make it easier for you, your family, your pets, etc.

## **1. Gather supplies**

- a. You will need clear plastic tote bins (various sizes), newspapers, packing materials, packing tape, masking tape, quart/gallon size plastic storage bags, large post-its and markers.
- b. As you pack, use the large post-its to make a list of what goes into each box. Tape this to the outside of the storage bin; this way when you stack the bins in a corner of an adjacent room, you can see all your notes and quickly find something you may have accidentally packed.
- c. Keep your kids and pets in mind when packing/moving things; young children and pets can often have a hard time adjusting to change so go slowly with the rearranging of items they are used to seeing every day.

## **2. Pull out items that are used every day**

- a. These include items such as the coffee maker, tea kettle, pots/skillets, mixing bowls, can opener, vegetable peelers, cooking utensils.
- b. To make life easier, use disposable cups, plates, and dinnerware – helps with not having a sink/running water to wash dishes. If you're a coffee and/or tea drinker, use disposable to-go cups.
- c. Set aside storage containers for leftover food, food storage bags, foil & plastic wrap.
- d. Also make sure you have a few cleaning supplies on hand.

## **3. Create a "new kitchen" station using a card table or dining room table or even move the kitchen table into a different part of the house – move your coffee maker along with its supplies (coffee, filters, creamer, cups) along with your microwave and toaster oven.**

- a. Setup up your makeshift/temporary kitchen area to include a variety of items to help get through the next 6-8 weeks.

## **4. Pack canned and boxed foods into categories**

- a. Keep breakfast food, canned goods, sauces, pasta, spices, baking supplies, drinks, and cooking oils together.
- b. Use low-sided open boxes to keep items organized and at-hand during the construction activity.
- c. Plastic bins or wooden crates can always be used later on, but they can be sturdier for heavy food items.
- d. Have easy-to-reach snack boxes or "on-the-go" items that can be snagged quickly without searching through a stack. Keep these close by the temporary kitchen you have set up.

## **5. Keep like items together when cleaning out your cabinets**

- a. As you empty out your cabinets, pack the entire cabinet into a box or tub, keeping the cabinet essentials together.
- b. It may seem ridiculous but when you start putting your kitchen back together after the construction has been completed, it goes much quicker to empty the box into a cabinet rather than pulling from multiple boxes.

**6. Set aside things that you no longer use anymore**

- a. Have a few boxes set aside to use for donatable items . . . if the item has multiple pieces that go together (i.e. cords) place inside or use zip ties to attach to a handle.
- b. Throw out anything that is broken or missing pieces or badly stained.

**7. Reorganize cookbooks & recipes**

- a. Take the time to go through the family recipe box or organize the clippings into a binder/box
- b. Pick a family favorite and blow up as a photo to add to the new kitchen

**8. Pack eating utensils in gallon size plastic storage bags**

- a. Use a bag for knives, forks, and spoons. It will make it easier to unpack these items once the kitchen has been completed.
- b. Do the same with cooking utensils and small gadgets.

**9. Pack glassware and dinnerware carefully**

- a. Even though you are packing these items for a short period of time, things can get damaged or broken in the process of storing them.
- b. Wrap fragile items in newspaper or bubble wrap to protect them. Mark the contents on the outside of the box.
- c. Store them someplace safe and out of the way of the main construction area. This also keeps kids & pets away from tripping over them.

**10. Take down blinds, curtains, rods, and wall decorations**

- a. Place the hardware in plastic storage bags and label with masking tape.
- b. Clean & dust these items if you will be using them again in the newly remodeled kitchen.
- c. If you are purchasing new wall décor and/or window treatments, use your color board you created during the earlier process when selecting countertops, backsplash tile and/or flooring.

**11. Move or cover existing furniture or electronics**

- a. If you can, move the existing furniture or electronics out of the room being remodeled; this allows for the space to be free of clutter for the construction crew. Also eliminates the possibility of damage.
- b. For items that can't be moved, cover these with plastic to help eliminate them from being covered in construction dust.
- c. Most general contractors will help with protective coverings (floor & doorways).

**12. Take down valuable pictures and wall hangings**

- a. Even in adjacent rooms (especially if you are using a room close by as a prep area) take down all your valuable pictures; eliminates the possibility of damage.

**13. Protect your pets**

- a. Keep them away from the work area. Dogs and cats can be a danger to themselves and the work crew if they are underfoot.
- b. If their food & water bowls are normally kept in the kitchen, a few days to a week ahead of time, SLOWLY move their food items to a different part of the home that is out of the way of construction or lots of people.
- c. Have a safe area setup away from the crew and construction zone; if they are people lovers or will bark continuously, you may need to think of having them kept off-site. Maybe a trip to Grandma's or a doggy day care center for the day?

## **How to Survive the Construction Phase of Your Project**

When work begins on your kitchen remodeling project, you and your family don't have to starve but you will have to make other arrangements for meals . . . prepare yourself for a minimum of 6 weeks without a kitchen and up to 14 weeks for a larger project. Eating out can be fun but gets old and expensive quickly!

The key to surviving the construction phase is to PLAN AHEAD . . . keep your contractor in the loop about your family's needs ahead of time.

Here are some tips to help you and your family survive:

### **1. *Set up a temporary kitchen***

- a. Find a space, preferably with a sink nearby, that will be out of the way of construction. Access to a few outlets to plug in small appliances would be great too!

### **2. *Keep it simple***

- a. Your temporary kitchen should be set up to prepare simple meals – you'll need a microwave oven and a few small appliances (toaster, coffee maker, electric griddle, tea pot).
- b. An electric wok is also a great investment if you don't have one; these can be used to make quick meals by mixing meat, vegetables, and pasta together. Simple, yet efficient!
- c. Crock pots are also very useful to have available to throw together a one-pot meal. If you have freezer space on hand or know someone that does, do a few meal prep meals ahead of time. You can take a one-pot meal out of the freezer the night before and toss it in the crockpot during the day.

### **3. *Have other supplies on hand***

- a. These include a manual can opener, sharp knife, spatulas, microwave accessories or toaster oven items, cutting board, plastic wrap, and paper towels.

### **4. *Talk to your contractor***

- a. About finding a place for your refrigerator (garage or an adjacent room) so you can continue to use it for food storage.
- b. After your new cabinetry is in place, RW Shaw would be happy to help provide and set up a temporary sink while you wait for your countertops to be installed.

### **5. *Setup an area for small appliances***

- a. Ask your contractor to help; maybe a few cabinets or a portion of your existing countertop can be salvaged during the demo to provide an area for food prep.

### **6. *Minimize cooking by making meals in advance***

- a. There are a lot of various "make-a-head" meals that can be frozen and then pulled out to either be re-heated or placed in a crockpot.

### **7. *Grill outdoors***

- a. If the weather is permittable, use your patio and deck furniture for dining. Lots of meals can be made on a grill and makes for easy cleanup.

### **8. *Use disposable plates, cups, napkins, and dinnerware.***

**9. Store food in plastic storage bags or throw-away containers to cut down on having additional dishes to wash.**

**10. Make cleanup easy**

- a. Minimize the use of dishes and keep paper towels handy, liquid dish soap, kitchen towels, scrubber, cleaning spray, and hand soap near your temporary sink area.

**11. Keep canned, boxed food, and sauces organized**

**12. Budget for eating out**

- a. Set aside funds for eating your meals out on days of demo or installing hard wood flooring, if you are getting serious electrical and/or plumbing work and these areas need the main source turned off, is a great day to escape the house.
- b. If you have children (especially babies) make arrangements ahead of time to maybe stay the days of serious demo, cabinetry installation, etc. with family or friends. If the weather is good, camping in the backyard is a fun too and a great experience for little ones.
- c. Talk to your contractor ahead of time to get an idea of when these major events may take place; they should be able to plan ahead and give you a few days' notice.
- d. Check your local newspaper or social media – there might be restaurant specials or kids eat free nights that might coincide with your need to be out of the house.

**13. Be patient**

- a. Remember that the end justifies the means; your remodeled kitchen will make life enjoyable in the years ahead.
- b. Be prepared for surprises to pop up . . . discuss options with your contractor and be upfront with them. In many circumstances delays will happen; materials might not show up on time or a construction member was injured or fell ill, inspectors will require additional work to be done before moving onto the next steps, etc.