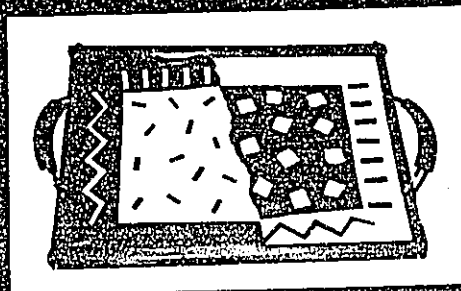


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LET'S REMODEL

Be realistic about addition project

Q: We are considering adding a room to our home. How long will it take to do the addition and how much chaos should I expect during the project? I was told that there are numerous people coming in and out during the project.

A: No one can prepare you for all of the unforeseen incidents that may transpire but it is important that you set realistic expectations for the project. You may want to ask the contractor for names of clients that have had additions done so that you have a better idea of what to expect. Be sure to discuss your concerns thoroughly about the project with your contractor including security issues and how to handle the traffic in and out of your home.

■ Establish a realistic timetable with your contractor. Trying to have an addition done in time for Thanksgiving may only cause everyone involved a great deal of grief. Factors that predetermine the length of time include weather, supply shortages, and inspections. When doing a standard room addition (200 square feet) you can expect roughly six weeks from the time the cement contractor begins.

■ Establish a communication center for questions that arise. Keep one main spokesperson for the family, if possible.

■ There will be plenty of dirt to deal with. Try to keep a positive attitude. Your contractor will have suggestions on how to keep it to a minimum.

■ Try to keep interruptions to a minimum with work crews. It can slow down production time and your concerns are best voiced with your contractor or supervisor.

There will be many types of subcontractors for the job. Following is an outline of what you might expect in the scheduling of the job but remember the production schedule can be altered significantly if something goes wrong. The cement contractor will take a day to dig the footing followed by a city inspector checking it on the following day.

After inspection, they will pour the concrete and wait a day to set the block work. The block work should set up 3-4 days before beginning the framing. After the block sets up, the carpenter crew will take 2-3 days to frame it along with one day to install the siding. After the carpenter is finished, plan on 2-3 days for the mechanicals (heating, plumbing, and electrical).

Once the mechanicals are roughed in, everything must be inspected by different city inspectors which can take 3-4



days. Once inspections pass, it will be time to insulate. Figure one day to insulate and one day to inspect. Some cities require an insulation inspection before allowing drywall to be installed. The drywall is next and will take one to one-and-one-half weeks depending how the humidity affects the drying of the mud. Once the mud has dried, it must be sanded smooth. This step along with the break through will be the largest mess of the construction stage.

After the drywall is complete, the finish mechanicals are put in place. This usually takes 2-3 days. The finish carpentry (door installation, trim, etc.) follows taking a day or two. The debris is cleaned up after this stage and most homeowners will do their own painting, staining, and floor covering.

One of the most important factors is the choice of contractor for the job. A more experienced contractor will schedule the job tightly, supervise it properly and will do what they can to make it a good experience for the homeowner. Take a deep breath and keep your perspective. Remodeling can be noisy, time-consuming and disruptive to the normal home environment. Keep your sense of humor and stay focused on the end result instead of just the process.

Mat Visona, Jr., Father & Son Construction Co., Troy, 810-635-5500.

If you have home improvement questions, call Gayle Walters at the Michigan Remodeling Association (MIRA) at 810-335-3232 or, send questions to "Let's Remodel," 2187 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 103, Sylvan Lake, MI 48320. Answers are provided by members of the MIRA, the local chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). Members include professional contractors, manufacturers, wholesalers and lenders representing all facets of residential and light commercial remodeling. For more information or a free copy of our membership roster, call 810-335-3232.

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