

Remodel
from page D14

fewer daylight working hours, many days off due to weather conditions and a lot of holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Martin Luther King Jr., and other sanctioned "non-work" days) during the cold weather months. This will definitely hinder the pace of your job.

Ideally, footings, will be trenched before the ground freezes a foot below grade level. Usually, contractors dig throughout the month of January in Michigan. If a contractor's schedule or permit approval prohibits trenching before the ground freezes, heavy insulated contractor blankets can be placed over the ground. This helps keep some of the existing heat in the ground until the contractor can dig the footings. When the contractor does not know about the work in advance and the ground has already frozen, a contractor can thaw the ground with commercial heaters. This method is often associated with the use of heavy tarp. The contractor can continue work under the tarp once the ground is softened. Concrete suppliers have a number of chemicals that can be added to the mix to aerate the concrete and help keep it from freezing and cracking. Once poured, flat concrete should be protected for a short period of time through the curing process when temperatures are below freezing.



The remaining phases of construction can progress smoothly through cold weather months. Although some trades such as painting or brick work can be delayed until warmer weather. Once a room is enclosed, interior work such as drywall, trim and mechanical trades can proceed. If necessary, a commercial heater can be used to warm the area under construction.

Most contractors' crews work shorter days during cold weather to avoid frostbite and to take advantage of the warmest hours in each day. Have patience and all the contractor to manage when and how long their crews work at your home. The contractor is better able to gauge the severity of external weather conditions, work load and the risks facing their trades people.

A winter remodeling project can be a win-win solution for the customer and the contractor. The customer benefits by getting a terrific new room finished and ready for their use by the spring or summer rather than experiencing the hassles of remodeling during those fleeting warm weather months. The contractor benefits by doing your job during the period of the year when business is slower and their crews are not fully utilized.

Eric Brakke, general manager, Four Seasons Sunrooms & Hurd Windows, South-

field, 810-352-4250.

For your home improvement questions, a copy of our roster book, or to have the association speak at a program, call Gayle Walters, NARI-Michigan Remodeling Association at 810-335-3232. Questions can be mailed to "Let's Remodel," 2187 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 103, Sylvan Lake, MI 48320. Answers are provided by members of the NARI-MRA the local chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry.



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