

Home Improvement Pre-Checklist

Provided by Hammer Brick & Home LLC — Home Care Library

1. Project & Paperwork

Use this checklist before you approve any home improvement work. It helps you stay organized, avoid surprises, and keep your project running smoothly.

- Confirm the full project scope in writing (rooms, areas, and materials).
- Review the itemized estimate — labor, materials, debris removal, and any permits.
- Verify contractor's license: NYC Home Improvement Contractor license number is printed and valid.
- Request a certificate of insurance (COI) with your name and property address listed if needed.
- Discuss approximate start date, work hours, and expected duration of the project.
- Clarify how change orders (extra work or changes) will be handled and priced.
- Confirm what is included in clean-up, debris removal, and final walkthrough.
- Share access instructions: keys, lockbox, buzzer, gate codes, or parking notes.

TIP: Keep all documents (estimate, photos, receipts) in one digital folder or printed binder so you can reference them during the job.

2. Protecting Your Home Before Work Starts

Taking a few steps before the crew arrives can prevent damage and make the project go faster.

- Remove fragile items from walls and shelves (photos, mirrors, decor, collectibles).
- Clear pathways from the entry door to the work areas — rugs, toys, small furniture.
- Move small furniture out of the work zones or into another room when possible.
- Unplug electronics and move them away from dust-heavy areas.
- Identify any existing damage (cracks, stains, broken tiles) and take photos for your records.
- Plan where materials will be stored (garage, outdoor area, basement, or dedicated room).
- Cover or remove window treatments near the work area (curtains, blinds).
- Ask which floors the contractor will protect and if you should add extra floor protection.

NOTE: For apartment buildings, let your building management or super know about construction dates and deliveries.

3. Safety & Family Considerations

Renovation is noisy and dusty. These steps help keep everyone safe and less stressed.

- Decide which rooms will stay “off limits” to tools, dust, or materials.
- Plan safe routes for kids to move around the home without crossing through work zones.
- Make a plan for pets: crate, separate room, or staying with a friend during heavy work days.
- Discuss noise-sensitive times (baby naps, work-from-home meetings) so loud work can be scheduled smartly.
- Ask which days will have the heaviest demolition or dust so you can plan errands or time outside.
- Confirm emergency contact info for the contractor or project lead.

4. Utilities, Access & Logistics

- Confirm where breakers, main water shutoff, and gas shutoff are located.
- Clear access to electrical panel, water meters, valves, and important utility areas.
- Decide where workers can park or load/unload materials.
- Provide instructions for trash storage area or building-specific disposal rules.
- If applicable, confirm where temporary power can be drawn from (outlets, extension cords).
- Share any building or HOA rules (quiet hours, elevator reservations, protection requirements).

TIP: Take a quick video walk-through of your home before work starts. It doubles as a visual record for both you and your contractor.

This checklist is provided by Hammer Brick & Home LLC as a general planning tool. It does not replace project-specific advice, building codes, or legal/insurance requirements.

Every home and jobsite is unique — always review your written estimate, agreement, and local regulations.