

## REMODELING'S TOP 15 RED FLAGS

Let's say you're looking to remodel your kitchen. One contractor tells you the project will take "two weeks" to complete.

"That should be a huge red flag. Nothing – no remodeling project – takes only two weeks to complete," said Michael Menn, AIA, partner with Andrew Poticha in Northbrook-based Design Construction Concepts, specialists in high-end remodeling and renovation projects.

According to Menn and Poticha, the "two week" promise isn't the only red flag to watch out for. In fact, their Top 10 Red Flags quickly became 15.

"Time permitting, we could have come up with dozens more," Poticha said, "It just depends on how detailed you want to get."

That being said, some red flags are basic, undeniable warnings that you either have or soon will have problems. According to Menn and Poticha, they include the following:

- If your contractor drywalls the house before running electrical lines. (Don't laugh, say the partners. It happens all the time).
- If your drain lines are running uphill. (The laws of gravity still apply).
- If the contractor doesn't have a street address. (Finding him or her "in" at a P.O. box is highly unlikely).
- If the contractor isn't licensed and refuses to get a license. (It's probably because he can't get a license or wants to cut a few corners. Neither are good signs.)
- If the contractor starts moving walls without employing an architect. (Not all walls can be moved without the sky falling. Literally).
- If the contractor has to be hounded for an estimate. (Communication probably won't improve).
- If the contractor refuses to get a building permit, watch out! (Most likely it has something to do with the legality of his practices).
- If the contractor makes major substitutions in the specs. (Specs are specific. They're not mere suggestions).
- If the contractor fails to provide you with more than three client references. (And if you can't go visit those projects or speak to the homeowners, there's an even bigger problem).
- If a contractor requires more than 50% downpayment. (Getting it back should you need to will be another even bigger problem).

- If the contractor refuses to supply you with materials or sub-contractor waivers of lien. (It could end up costing you dearly).
- If the contractor isn't familiar with new notification or lead abatement laws. (Rules are rules. Laws are laws. Besides, what else doesn't he/she know about?)
- If the contractor doesn't want to put his sign up in front of your house while he's working on it. (He should be proud of his work. So should you).
- If the contractor refuses to give you an emergency contact number. (It probably means he will only respond during normal business hours. If you're lucky).
- If the contractor says you don't need plans drawn up by an architect. (You do. And those plans need to be signed by a licensed architect).

Even one of the above red flags should give you pause, cautioned Menn and Poticha. "But when you start seeing two, three, four or more, that's your cue to bail. It's not going to get any better."

For more information about Design Construction Concepts, phone the firm's corporate headquarters at 847-498-1676 or visit [www.DCC-LTD.com](http://www.DCC-LTD.com).

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