



Keeping Children Out of Harm's Way During a Remodel

Summer break and peak remodeling season clash every year, bringing workers into homes filled with curious and energetic young ones. As the two seasons get into full-swing, there is growing excitement over fresh ideas and new experiences. Now is the time for homeowners with children to plan for necessary precautions that should be undertaken during a home remodel. The National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) offers the following tips to keep children out of harm's way during a remodel.

Communication is Key

Communicate with your remodeling contractor openly and let him or her know what to expect while working in your household. Inform them about your children and their ages, and their behavior patterns and how mischief-prone they may be so the contractor's crew can be safety-aware at all times. Discuss where tools and materials will be stored, who will be responsible for cleaning the area, and what sections of wall or floor can be covered at the end of the day. Ask to be notified on days when the remodeling crew will be carrying in large pieces of equipment or building materials and plan an activity for your children that day.

Communicate with your children, and be sure both they and you can anticipate the number of workers likely to be in the house at a given time, and the general work hours. Consider the proximity of the work area to your child's room or play area, and if necessary, designate a new, safe area for play and toy storage. It's also important to set safety rules that they will need to follow while the work crews are present. If possible, designate an entrance for workers' use only, and advise your children never to use that entrance. This will help keep children out of the contractor's way, and vice versa.

Environmental Hazards

Lead is always an important consideration while remodeling, but it is especially significant in its harmful effects on children. Lead-based paint from the demolition portion of a project can send paint dust airborne. Lead paint is often found in homes built before 1978 and can be especially detrimental to young children. Review the risks with your remodeling contractor or check with your local Environmental Protection Agency office for guidelines to follow. Be cognizant of when your remodeling contractor will be using hazardous chemicals and work with them to devise a proper ventilation plan. Planning a short get-away is sometimes advised after the use of strong chemical agents to allow the home to properly air out.

Windows and Ladders

Another safety area to consider is an open window. Try to keep ladders and tempting easy-to-climb structures away from open windows. Remember that insect screens are meant for keeping out insects, and won't suffice in protecting your child from a fall.

Adding a Pool?

The child with the pool is the most popular kid on the block, which makes you the most responsible parent. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 350 children under the age of 5 drown each year in residential pools, and thousands more are treated each year for near-drowning accidents. Preventative safety measures can be taken in the pool-building process. During the design process, consider the proximity of the pool to the house. If it is very close to a second-story deck, or even overhanging tree branches, children might be tempted to jump from the structure into the pool.

NARI members represent a select group from the approximately 800,000 companies and individuals in the U.S. identifying themselves as professional remodelers.

The remodeling market, a \$275 billion industry in the U.S. in 2005, is expected to continue to experience significant growth. It is estimated that more than a million homes per year undergo major renovation or remodeling.

NARI is a professional association whose members voluntarily subscribe to a strict code of ethics. Consumers may wish to search www.RemodelToday.com to find a qualified professional who is a member of NARI.

Consumers can call NARI of Central Ohio for additional information and a brochure, "How to Select a Remodeling Professional," or visit www.trustnari.org for more information.