

## **The New Regulatory Climate for D.I.Y. Home Remodelers**

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Remodeling your home, even with professional guidance, is now more complicated. Building codes involving the structure have gotten stricter. They are structurally more demanding and now relate more than ever to specific local conditions of weather, soil bearing and seismographic activity .

Health concerns over lead paint and the possibility of generating lead dust and contamination during painting and remodeling of projects in homes built before 1978 have created the enactment of strict methods of remediation and detailed record keeping by the Federal EPA and State Governments. Compliance is not an option any longer, as it was when Congress passed the legislation just a short time ago, where under certain conditions a homeowner could opt out of these costly regulations. The EPA has recently removed this option. Whether this was legal or not will eventually be settled in the courts.

And finally, among what I consider the big three, is a new energy code with two methods of compliance. The Prescriptive Approach [pre-specified] or the Trade Off Approach that requires the use of ResCheck Software to make sure the specifications chosen meet the overall performance requirements of your climate zone. In October of 2010, about 80% of state and local code officials adopted the 2012 International Energy Conservation Code [IECC]. It was estimated that this code would have an expected energy savings of 30% over the 2006 code.

### **As building Code officials vote to replace the 2006 International Residential Building Code's energy chapter with the newer IECC code, what will it mean for the DIYer?**

The new code improves air tightness, increases window, exterior door and skylight efficiencies, ups the required "R" [insulation] ratings while it saves electricity for lighting and energy losses from HVAC systems, hot water storage and piping. Each of the eight climate zones have their own requirements. The good side of this, is that it makes sense for the long run for the environment and will save money in future energy costs for the owner. It requires the use of better methods, materials and products, all of which are more costly. The selection of the many choices in each of the categories just mentioned and deciding what is best for you is now more time consuming and difficult as you go through the process of setting objectives and making decisions to plan your project. As part of the construction permitting process, these decisions are required to be made before construction begins and are specified with the submitted plans in order to receive a permit to build. Therefore, whereas in the past you could make many of these decisions throughout the building process, now you have to decide almost everything

before the first shovel goes in the ground. The DIYer will need an impartial professional, who is driven by their clients best interests, to help them develop a cost-effective project that meets the requirements of the codes and help them through the permitting process. The down side of this is that the upgrading will cost more up front.

**EPA's Lead Safety For Renovations, Repair and Painting as it applies to one family homes as of April 22, 2010.**

It's important for you to know that if you live in a pre-1978 built home or child occupied facilities, the contractors you hire for remodeling and painting must be certified and use lead-safe work practices during renovations. The exclusions to this are: (1) interior work disturbing less than 6 square feet, (2) exterior work disturbing less than 20 square feet with the exception of window replacement, demolition or prohibited practices.

Renovations performed by homeowners in their own homes are excluded. However, this is a slippery slope. Why? The required practices are for the protection of your family's health and the guests that visit your home. It is to protect the environment as a whole, but even more important to you is that part of the interior of your home and the outside area that is adjacent to it. Proper clean up and practices requires specialized tools and vacuum cleaners that are expensive and may not be worthwhile to own and unavailable to rent.

In addition, when you go to sell your home, a buyer will question and may even want to perform tests to confirm the home and the grounds have no contaminants. For all these reasons and many more, I suggest you hire someone with the knowledge and credentials to follow the practices or go to school yourself for certification if you decide to do it yourself. For more information, go to EPA's website and download the "Renovate Right" pamphlet.

**In Conclusion:**

When you add the new energy code, lead renovation practices in pre-1978 homes and the new structural requirements, the coordination of projects from conception to completion are now more important than ever. The regulative authorities have added requirements that are adding additional upfront costs to projects compared to projects built just a short time ago. Builders, general contractors and trade contractors are now considering the time and cost impact all this adds on in addition to their overhead, sales commissions and profit when pricing a job.

To sum it up, the professionals and the state and local building officials in the industry are engaged in a learning curve as they adjust to most of this and it will be even more difficult for a DIYer with less experience to go through all we mentioned and do what's best for themselves.

Even with the new regulatory complexities, it may still make more sense financially than ever to become the developer of your own project. If you are willing to put in some time, consider hiring a Do It Yourself Coach for your next project. Visit us at [WWW.TheDIYCoachUSA.com](http://WWW.TheDIYCoachUSA.com) to learn more about planning a project or [WWW.RemodelingReports.com](http://WWW.RemodelingReports.com) for more specific product and construction information in article form. It's free to download or copy. Good luck on your next project.

May the Coach be with you,

Coach Jerry