

Your home is probably the most significant investment you have made. Naturally you want to maintain and improve it. Millions of people remodel their homes each year. The reasons for remodeling are as varied as the home owners themselves; and when well-planned and well-done, a remodeling project can substantially enhance the value of a home.

WHY CGR?

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Remodelers™ Council created the Certified Graduate Remodeler™ (CGR) program to help consumers identify remodelers who perform professional, quality work. CGRs have demonstrated their commitment to professionalism in the industry through continuing education.

When you hire a Certified Graduate Remodeler, you can expect an experienced professional committed to quality. Remodeling is a service, not a commodity. The quality of this service will determine your satisfaction with the finished project. That is why you should choose a CGR.

WHAT IS A CERTIFIED GRADUATE REMODELOR?

To obtain the CGR designation, a remodeler must meet nationally defined criteria for previous experience, adhere to prescribed business standards, and engage in continuing education. If your remodeler has earned the CGR designation, you can be confident that he or she will provide professional-caliber work.

To maintain the CGR designation, all CGRs must complete a continuing education requirement every three years. When remodelers demonstrate a commitment to the industry, they also prove their concern for customers. Continuing education includes business-related seminars, trade shows and courses designed to enhance professional skills. CGRs are also encouraged to obtain other professional designations.

“I didn’t know what CGR meant when I chose Scott Sevon. But, after seeing his work it means professionalism and quality to me.”

Greg and Rosemary Insolia of Inverness, IL

GETTING STARTED

- Develop an idea of the remodeling project you want.
- Determine the amount of money you feel comfortable spending.
- Seek referrals from friends and neighbors—make sure the remodeler has a working knowledge of the types and ages of homes in the area.
- Contact a local trade association and the Better Business Bureau to find out more about the contractor you are interested in.
- Verify the remodeler has the appropriate license(s).

Visit www.nahb.org/designations to find a list of active CGRs in your state.

Once you find a remodeler and settle on a plan, request a detailed, written contract that protects both you and the contractor and that complies with local, state and federal laws. The contract must spell out the work that will and will not be performed and provide a fair payment schedule.

DETERMINING YOUR BUDGET

As you envision your remodeling project, you may be thinking about a new baby or an aging relative. You may simply want to renovate an older property. Walls and doors, windows and floors, wiring, plumbing, appliances: all these things cost money, and you will need some guidance to plan what is possible within your budget.

Ask yourself the following three questions:

1. What can I afford?
2. What improvements would I value most?
3. What is my property worth, and how will my project affect its value?

Part of this process may include financing. Many owners choose an “equity line of credit”, the equivalent of a second mortgage. Others will simply re-finance their existing mortgages to take advantage of increased equity. An experienced, established remodeling contractor can be very helpful to you in this process.

NAHB AND THE REMODELERS™ COUNCIL

As the largest and most influential trade organization in the remodeling industry, NAHB has worked more than 50 years to strengthen the professionalism of its members. NAHB is recognized in the remodeling industry as the leading advocate of quality construction, responsible business practices, and reliable customer service.

The NAHB Remodelers™ Council represents the remodeling industry members of the NAHB. Founded in 1982, the Council provides information, education and designation programs to improve the business and construction expertise of its members and to enhance the professional image of the industry.

“Remodelor” is a trademark that identifies NAHB members who are active in residential and commercial remodeling. For more information on the CGR program and choosing a remodeler, contact:

NAHB Remodelers™ Council
1201 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
www.nahb.org/remodel
800.368.5242 ext. 8216

The award of any NAHB University of Housing designation does not represent and should not be construed as a guarantee or certification of the quality of the designation-holder's work product. Conferal of a designation represents only NAHB's affirmation that the individual designation-holder completed the stipulated requirements of the respective designation program.

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE REMODELER

- What sets you apart from other remodelers?
- Are you insured? Will you provide proof of Worker's Compensation and Liability Insurance?
- What type of warranty program do you offer?
- How long have your trade people been working with you?
- Do you belong to a local trade association? If yes, which one(s)? In what association activities are you involved?
- Has your firm won any awards?
- Can you provide a list of references, including homeowners, suppliers, subcontractors, and consultants such as architects and engineers? Can I tour a project in progress?
- How often during the week are you at a jobsite?
- Who will supervise on a daily basis? Will that person have the authority to make final decisions?
- How are communications handled during the project? Do you have standard operating procedures for communications in your company?
- Do you use environmentally responsible construction techniques?
- Will you bring in a dumpster and where will you put it?
- Do you furnish a port-a-potty for your workmen and subs?
- How do you handle pets on the premises?
- How much will the project disrupt our lives?
- When would you be able to start? How long will it take?
- How can we help in the process?

QUESTIONS TO ASK REFERRALS

- Why did you choose this remodeler?
- Was the company easy to work with?
- Did you receive a written project schedule? Was it updated and explained regularly?
- Was the project completed when promised? If not, why?
- Were communications clear and accurate? Could you understand everything in lay terms?
- Were the remodeler's vendors and trade contractors active and positive parts of the team?
- Were regular production meetings held with you?
- Was a minimum one-year warranty included in writing?
- Was follow up on warranty work completed in a timely manner?
- Was the project supervisor accessible?
- Did the project stay within your budget?
- Did the remodeler follow all plans and specifications?
- Were change orders submitted in writing for approval before additional work proceeded?
- Do all mechanical systems (i.e., air conditioning, heating, plumbing, and electrical) function satisfactorily?
- Was energy efficiency considered and incorporated in the remodeling plan?
- Were your home and its contents protected during the project?
- Was the job supervised closely?
- Was the jobsite kept orderly and clean at the end of the day?
- Would you hire this remodeler again?
- Would you recommend this firm to a friend?



"After getting bids from two remodelers I chose Stephen Robinson based on his CGR. To me the CGR designation indicates he goes the extra mile."
Kristy Abbett of Middletown, IN

Hire a
Certified
Graduate
Remodeler™