

Change Orders Usually Bring Additional Costs

By: Breck Powers (Houston Chronicle)

In residential remodeling, the term "change order" can make a big difference in a projects success.

A change order is additional work that was not included in the original scope of the project and can either be customer driven or contractor driven.

A customer-driven change order is a request by the customer to perform additional work. For example, the original scope of work may have included painting one room. During the project, the customer then decides to have the entire house painted.

A professional Houston remodeler will then work up a quotation for the cost of the additional work and present it to the customer for their approval. If the customer approves of the additional cost, the contractor will proceed.

The additional cost associated with a customer-driven change order is totally controlled by the customer. If they choose not to incur the additional expense, it is totally their discretion.

A contractor-driven change order is additional work that must be performed by the contractor, but was not included in the work. This would be an additional coast to the customer and was not included in the original scope of project.

For example, the contractor removes Sheetrock from a wall and uncovers electrical wiring that was installed improperly or not to code. This would have been impossible for anyone to foresee while the quotation was being prepared due to hidden electrical wires, and unfortunately is inherent to remodeling.

The contractor would then prepare a quotation for the additional work and present it to the customer for their approval. In this situation, the customer would be required to correct the electrical problem and bring the wiring up to city codes.

When choosing a professional Houston remodeler, it helps the consumer to be conscious of the potential abuse of change orders. Experienced remodelers are aware of many common conditions to look for when preparing an estimate.

Less experienced remodelers may not have the experience to foresee possible problem areas that may increase the cost of the project. This can be a costly problem that occurs in the remodeling industry on a daily basis.

One contractor's price may be substantially higher than another contractor's price because they had the experience and knowledge to foresee some of the additional work up front. This can cause huge swings in price that may be difficult for the customer to fully understand when comparing estimates.

The best way to avoid this problem is to hire a professional Houston remodeler that has the experience and knowledge to prepare a quotation that most accurately includes the total cost of the project.

The quotation should include a detailed description of the scope of work along with adequate allowances for the certain products.

The remodeling process is much more enjoyable when the time is taken up front to minimize the likelihood of change orders. When this is done, both the remodeler and customer feel better about the project, and the final cost is no surprise.