

Renovating a House

Renovating a home can be exciting but it can also be stressful. There are some things you need to know and do to make your renovation as low stress as possible.

Before you start

House insurance is designed to cover your home from the unexpected – this usually doesn't extend to your renovations. Your current house insurance policy may not cover you when you make renovations or may not apply until the renovations are complete.



Check with your insurer before you start to see what your current policy covers you for. You may need additional contract works insurance depending on policy you've got and the type of renovations you're doing.

It's important to check your policy wording and talk to your insurer if you're not clear about what cover you have.

DIY

It's important you understand what work you can do yourself and what needs to be completed and certified by a registered professional to ensure you're covered by your insurance.

If you do your own work, you're responsible for

- figuring out whether any building work you're planning requires a building consent
- making sure any work complies with the Building Code, even if the work doesn't need a consent.

If you attempt work that should be completed by a professional and later need to make a claim, you may not be covered if your work in any way caused or contributed to the damage.

The Ministry of Business Innovation & Employment has produced a guide, Building work that does not require a building consent, which can provide some guidance.

You can download the guide here:

[Building work that does not require a building consent](#)

Contract works insurance

If you're building a new house, garage, studio or other building, or making alterations to an existing building, you may need to take out specialist contract works insurance.

Contract works policies insure you for accidental losses or damage during the building or renovation process.

It covers

- existing structures – including existing buildings or outbuildings you're making alterations to
- construction materials and equipment at the building site, and may provide cover when they're in transit.

If there are delays to your renovations, it may mean you have to extend the period you're covered for. Keep your insurer up to date with any delays so they can make sure you always have the right cover in place. To find out more about contract works insurance and the other benefits that are included in these, contact your insurer.

Moving during renovations

If you or your tenants need to move out of your house while it's being renovated, work out how long your house will be vacant. Most house insurance policies become invalid or are subject to reduced cover and higher excesses if the house is vacant for more than 60 days, so if you'll be gone for 60 days or longer, let your insurer know.

If you need to move your contents out of your house while it's being renovated, make sure you talk to your insurer. Some insurers won't cover items kept in off-site storage, and many won't cover damage done in-transit under your standard contents policy.

TIPS



1 – Use registered, reputable tradespeople. Check reviews online and get multiple quotes. The cheapest quote might not come from the person who'll do the best job.

2 – Thoroughly plan and cost all your renovations, put together a budget then track spending as you go. Then you'll be in a good position to know if you can afford unexpected costs when they come along.

3 – Talk to the local council to understand whether you'll be affected by any local by-laws as a result of your planned renovations.

Once you've finished

Remember to contact your insurer to update your house's sum insured to include the new improvements. If you don't, you might find the sum insured may not be sufficient to include your improvements if you make a claim.

