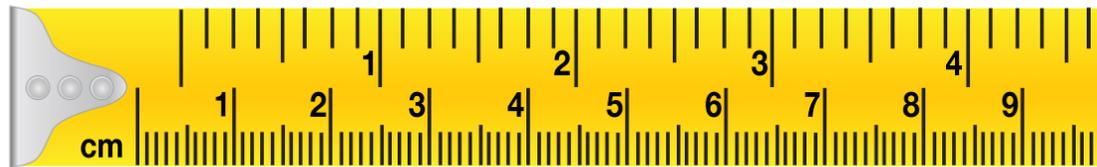




— By Expert Contractor,  
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# Just Ask Bob

Your Bathroom:

## DIY (Do It Yourself) or Hire a Contractor?

Feeling inspired, has “Just Ask Bob” motivated and educated you enough through this column to get you up to tackle your ever growing “to do list” of repairs and renovations around your own home?

### DIY

Bathrooms can be one of the most complex rooms in the entire home to remodel. First there is the designing and planning stage. I have seen many DIY bathroom renovations where the placement of the toilet was done so poorly that the bathroom door would only open half way and then bang into the toilet! If this sounds like you then do yourself a favor and either have family and friends help you plan out the job, or hire a designer and/or contractor for some help.

Bathrooms will most often require electrical work, and yes, the law does allow a homeowner to run their own wiring – however a permit must still be taken out and all the work must be inspected.

The bathroom will require plumbing work, and it could be as simple as a face lift with new faucets and shut off valves, or as complex as ripping out and replacing all the old galvanized supply piping and cast iron drains and vent stacks. Depending on the extent of the work a plumbing permit may also be required. The bathroom may also require tiling work, dry walling, concrete board, in-floor heating (excellent way to keep that new tile floor toasty warm all winter long), or a new exhaust fan. When it comes to bathrooms; each level of the home poses its own interesting challenges and levels of difficulty, whether the basement bathroom, main floor bathroom or second floor bathrooms.

The most important first step “prior to the demolition” (the fun part!) is to perform a reality check on yourself and determine what skills you have for the various construction stages. Then you can assess if you can



finish your renovation in a reasonable amount of time and not take months (or years) picking at it when you feel up to it (which can lead to your spouse packing up and leaving – in the construction industry it’s commonly referred to as “divorce dust”).

Once again, back to the topic of “demolition”. I have seen, and repaired, too many of these “disaster DIY, demolition jobs” for many people. Please make sure all of the following are done before you start to rip the bathroom into pieces:

- Shut off the water supply to each fixture – if this is not possible then shut off the water to the entire home (I have seen too many homeowners flood the bathroom by trying to rip out toilets and tubs while they were still connected to the water supply lines)
- Cap off all of the bathroom’s drain lines to keep the demolition debris from falling in and damaging and/or clogging your home’s sewer system (many homeowners end up having to call in a drain cleaner to remove all the demolition debris from the sewer pipes)
- Make sure that all power is off before you move the wiring around. Never try to perform your demolition around it without the power being shut off!

### When to call in a pro

If you are not comfortable doing DIY work, then don’t! Call in a pro and have it done right, the first time. Many DIY’s have a contractor just take care of all the electrical and plumbing work, which are two of the most critical aspects of the job, as far as safety and damages are concerned. Electrical work that is not done properly can easily start a fire, plumbing work that is not done properly can easily cause thousands in damages, not only to the bathroom but the leaking water under high pressure can easily damage other adjacent rooms to the bathroom.

Have you been dreaming of having a “heated tile floor” that will make you the envy of all your friends and family? Remember this: if it’s not installed right the first time around, you don’t get a second chance unless you completely rip out the new tile floor that is now on top of the heating grid you just had installed. A good idea is to have a contractor do this part of the job for you, unless you are very sure of your abilities.



Photo by Andy Dean

### Where to go for advice

Call your local city hall building and licensing department when you are unsure, or simply wish to verify what a contractor has told you in terms of what you need/don’t need with respect to bathroom permits, and/or to verify your contractor’s licensing requirements.

Books, books and more books. I definitely recommend you spend some time at the bookstore. The internet is amazing for gathering information, however I would caution you to double check and independently verify everything you read on the internet (before trying it). Big box home improvement stores constantly have DIY seminars where you can actually learn how to build your bathroom and learn new skills.

Then there is the option of “Just Asking Bob”. Contact me if you have questions, or write to Silver and Gold. Together we will ensure you’re on the right track to the proper, most secure way to a great project!

**Bobby Assadourian** is the owner of Triple R Inc. of Hamilton. Questions? You may reach Bobby by calling (289) 649-0196 or visiting [www.triplerinccontracting.ca](http://www.triplerinccontracting.ca) or c/o Silver and Gold at [info@sngpublishing.com](mailto:info@sngpublishing.com)

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