



SKLZ Construction Explains Why Laval and Montreal Kitchen Renovations Should Include a 10 to 15 Percent Contingency Budget for Hidden Structural Issues

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SKLZ Construction is advising homeowners in Laval and Montreal planning kitchen renovations to incorporate a contingency budget of 10 to 15 percent above the project estimate to account for hidden structural, mechanical, and electrical issues that are commonly discovered once demolition begins. The guidance reflects the company's direct experience across residential renovation projects in the region, where conditions concealed behind finished walls and flooring frequently require unplanned remediation work before the renovation can proceed.

Kitchen renovations involve a higher rate of hidden-condition discoveries than most other residential renovation categories, due to the concentration of plumbing, electrical, and ventilation systems within a relatively small area. Behind the surfaces of an older kitchen, contractors regularly encounter outdated wiring that does not meet current code requirements, corroded or improperly modified plumbing, subfloor damage from historical moisture exposure, and structural members compromised by previous renovation work or pest activity. None of these conditions is visible during the estimating phase, and all of them require resolution before new finishes can be installed.

The 10 to 15 percent contingency figure reflects the realistic range of unplanned costs observed across residential kitchen projects in the Montreal and Laval markets. On a \$40,000 kitchen renovation, that contingency represents a reserve of \$4,000 to \$6,000. In projects where hidden conditions are found and addressed without exceeding the contingency, the remaining funds can be redirected to finishes or held in reserve. In projects with more extensive conditions, the contingency prevents cost overruns from halting work mid-project and forcing homeowners into difficult decisions about scope reduction or additional financing.

“Every estimate we provide is based on what we can see,” said Mikael Guay, Owner of SKLZ Construction. “The contingency is not a hedge against poor estimating – it’s a recognition that kitchens in older homes carry decades of history behind the walls. The clients who budget for it are the ones who get through a renovation without surprises turning into crises.”

SKLZ Construction provides kitchen renovation in Montreal for residential clients across the greater Montreal area, with a renovation process that includes a pre-demolition assessment designed to identify as many potential hidden-condition risks as possible before the budget is finalized. That assessment does not eliminate the possibility of discoveries during demolition, but it reduces the likelihood of major surprises by documenting known risk factors associated with the property’s age, construction type, and renovation history.

The company’s work in kitchen renovation follows the same planning framework, where the age and construction profile of properties in the Laval market create a distinct set of risk considerations. Properties built during the post-war residential construction period, which accounts for a significant portion of Laval’s housing stock, frequently contain aluminum wiring, older plumbing configurations, and insulation products that require careful handling during renovation. Identifying those conditions during the assessment phase allows the contingency to be sized more accurately to the specific risk profile of the project.

Quebec’s residential construction code requires that renovation work bringing a kitchen up to current standards address any code deficiencies identified during the project, regardless of whether those deficiencies were part of the original scope. That regulatory requirement means that hidden conditions discovered during demolition are not optional to address. They must be remediated as part of the permitted renovation. Homeowners who have not set aside contingency funds for this possibility are often caught between completing the renovation properly and managing unexpected cost exposure.

About SKLZ Construction: SKLZ Construction is a Montreal-based home renovation company founded by Sebastien Lalonde and serving homeowners across Montreal and Laval. The company provides kitchen and

bathroom renovations, basement finishing, and general residential renovation services, with a planning process that incorporates pre-demolition assessment and contingency budgeting as standard components of project delivery.

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SKLZ Construction

SKLZ Construction Inc. is a Laval-based residential renovation company serving homeowners throughout Laval, Montreal, and surrounding communities. The company was founded by Sebastien Lalonde, who has been working in the renovation industry since 2022.

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