

## Starting a basement project

Home renovation season is upon us. With the end of the holiday season (September long weekend), people start to think about the coming of cold weather and the projects that they will take on in the fall. One of the biggest undertakings is a "basement development". I have previously talked about permits and how important they are. The most concerning are the Development permits, Building permits and Electrical permits. Just to reiterate, regarding electrical permits, it is law in the province of Alberta that if you install, add to or modify an electrical system, you must obtain an electrical permit. Remember 2 inspections, one before the drywall goes up and one when the job is finished. The way the system works is as follows.

A development permit is applied for to determine if you are allowed to do the work you want to do. Concerns like zoning bylaws, sufficient parking and noise bylaws are but a few. Once it is determined that you can proceed with the job, the next step is the building permit. This is where you usually have to submit drawings that will be reviewed, then they will tell you the bylaws and building requirements that need be met in order to pass an inspection. This is a good thing because most home owners don't know all the building codes and local bylaws. So this kind of assistance is pretty important.

Finally the trade permits, the Electrical, the plumbing and the gas. These are normally taken out by a licensed contractor who comes in to do the work. If your going to take on this work yourself, you need to do your home work then take out a home owners permit. Did you know, that January 1st 2016 saw major changes in the Canadian electrical code pertaining to new installations of residential electrical wiring. Be prepared.....

Over the years I have been asked many times to come in after a project has been started, and help figure out why it failed the inspection. It can get costly if you finish the rough in portion of the project, call for an inspection and you fail to pass. In the county of Strathcona, according to Chris Gow, co ordinator of development permitting, if you take out an electrical permit and fail the initial inspection they will give you a second inspection for free. If you fail the second and they have to return for a 3rd inspection for the same project, you get charged \$180.00. In Edmonton, the policy is if you fail your initial electrical inspection, there may be a \$240.00 charge for them to return to re inspect.

Let me give you some advice based on over 35 years experience. If you truly want to save some money and do the electrical portion of the project yourself, be smart, consult with an electrical contractor you trust. For a nominal fee, you will get expert advice on such things as electrical wiring requirements and lighting design and choices. Hundreds if not thousands of dollars can be saved by making the right choices. That man cave may not be as expensive as you think.