

## Lighting is important in bathroom designs

Tubs and tiles, faucets and fixtures - these are the components that come to mind when it's time to remodel or add a bath. Yet, homeowners are often in the dark about one of the key elements of bath design - lighting.

The National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) suggests consumers first consider the amount of light needed, and then select the type of light that is most flattering to the bath's colors.

Bath lighting fulfills three functions, says the NKBA. General lighting must be sufficient to illuminate a room that frequently has just one window. Task lighting must lend itself to a multitude of grooming needs such as shaving, makeup application and hair care. Accent lighting can help create a mood and showcase the beauty of a new bath.

In small, light-colored baths, mirror lighting may be sufficient for general and task illumination. Skylights, glass block windows or overhead artificial lighting can contribute to general illumination.

Theatrical strip lights and sidelights along a mirror are examples of task lighting. Task lighting should be free of shadows and glare, especially over a mirror. Mirror lighting should shine evenly on both sides of the face. A light-colored countertop will reflect light under the chin.

Incandescent light is used normally for makeup application, because its reddish cast is most flattering to complexions. Incandescent light produces a point of light that can be directed on an object or space.

On the other hand, fluorescent tubes disperse light over a larger space. Therefore, there are fewer shadows and the light cannot be directed on an object.

### Contract details avoid problems

"Hey, this is twice the price we agreed upon! There's no way I'm paying that much!" Sound familiar? Well if you have a disagreement with your contractor, there are a number of ways to resolve it according to a booklet published by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), "How to Hire a Contractor".

The first rule is to be reasonable. Go over the contract calmly and listen carefully to what the contractor has to say. If you are still dissatisfied, seek the opinion of a building inspector, a knowledgeable friend, or if the problems are serious enough, your lawyer.

Delays, poor workmanship and price are among the most common complaints. A well detailed contract and a good set of drawings and specifications is your best line of defence when dealing with problem contractors. A registered letter explaining your concerns to the contractor, with future actions if the problem is not rectified, may also help.

Poor workmanship and unsatisfactory business practices can be reported by registering a complaint with the Better Business Bureau.

For a copy of "How to Hire a Contractor", or a complete list of CMHC publications, programs or videos dealing with renovations, contact your local CMHC office.

Deluxe cool fluorescent light best simulates natural sunlight. It also flatters cool colors such as blue and green, but should not be used in baths where warm colors predominate.

Deluxe warm fluorescent light is a good choice for baths decorated in yellow, orange, rust and other warm colors, and blends nicely with incandescent light.

A relatively new type of fluorescent lighting - full spectrum - flatters all colors.

Current trends in bath design pre-

sent special lighting challenges. For example, privacy zones - the small enclosures that surround tubs, lavatories and water closets to allow two people to function comfortably in the same bath - should be lit adequately for comfort and safety. Accent lights over a whirlpool tub add to the ambience.

Because professional bath designers are well-versed in the many options available in product and design, the consumer can be assured of a bath that is functionally sound and beautiful to behold.

## Tips on avoiding shady contractors

According to the booklet "How to Hire a Contractor", published by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, those interested in having renovations done to their home should beware of contractors who:

- knock on the door to tell you they just happen to be doing some work in the area and can give you a "special price";
- promise to discount if you allow them to use your home "to advertise our work." The same offer will have been made to everyone;
- quote a price without seeing the job;
- demand a down payment "to buy materials". All reputable contractors maintain charge accounts with their suppliers;
- refuse to give you a written contract specifying exactly what they say they will do.

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