

Home improvement

For bathrooms: out with old, in with new

Out with the old and in with the new.

This concept of change has helped make the bathroom the most frequently remodeled room in the home.

"The desire to replace outdated fixtures has been cited as the number one reason for bath remodeling," says Francis Jones, CKD, CBD, executive director of the National Kitchen and Bath Association "but today's consumers are doing more than just replacing. They want more than the typical five-by-seven-foot tiled space."

Today's bathrooms have emerged into "body rooms" designed to pamper and provide comfort. A recent survey conducted by the NKBA revealed that, more and more, baths being designed and installed today include amenities such as whirlpool tubs, bidets, steam facilities and entertainment equipment.

But there is more to creating a beautiful or luxurious bathroom than just replacing a standard tub with a jetted one, or moving fixtures to make more space.

Before beginning a bathroom remodeling, ample consideration should be given to all of the factors involved in creating a well-designed, safe room.

"Bathrooms, if not properly designed and installed, will be a hindrance rather than a luxury, regardless of what they include," says Russell W. Platek, CKD, CBD. "They should, first and foremost, meet the five basic human needs of sanitation, storage, grooming, comfort and aesthetics."

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Platek indicates that: **Sanitation** - Involves meeting the personal hygiene needs of the bathroom's users.

Grooming - Includes provisions for daily routines such as shaving, makeup application, hair care, oral hygiene, etc. It involves planning for proper and adequate lighting and work space.

Storage - Involves planning ample space, practically arranged for towels, medicines, toiletries, grooming aids, cosmetics, cleaning supplies, appliances and other items.

Comfort - Concerns not only the users' personal habits and preferences, such as reading, soaking or relaxing, but largely concerns the safety of individuals using the bathroom.

Aesthetics - Refers to how a room appears to the eye - the total look. It is concerned with the elements and principles of design: Form, space, line, texture, color, balance, continuity and emphasis.

"There also are recommended clearance spaces to consider," says Platek. "Appropriate space must be allowed on the sides and in front of water closets and bidets, between walls and sink bowls and in front of lavatories, and for entering and exiting tub and shower fixtures."

Minimum clearances, as prescribed by the NKBA, include the following:

- Water closets (toilets): 15" on each side, measured from the centre of the bowl.
- 21" in front of fixture.
- 30" from centre of a bidet.
- Lavatories (sinks): 2" from edge of bowl to wall or obstruction.
- 21" in front of fixture.
- 4" between bowl edges for lavatories with more than one sink bowl.
- Tubs and showers: 21" space to enter and exit fixture.

There also are prescribed heights and locations/placements for shower heads, tub faucets, soap dishes, grab bars, toilet paper dispensers and other bathroom accessories.

Some of the most critical consid-

eration in a bathroom remodeling have to do with what's behind the walls, not what's in front of them," says Platek.

"For example, if someone wants to install a whirlpool tub, certain plumbing and electrical requirements must be met. In some instances, it may involve the installation of additional circuitry in the home or the addition or replacement of pipes and traps."

Achieving success in a bath remodeling requires a lot of knowledge, planning and expertise. To help ensure that the project is done

properly and to make the process go more smoothly, consumers should consult a professional, such as a member of the National Kitchen and Bath Association or a Certified Bathroom Designer.

They are aware of the elements of good design, available products, plumbing and electrical codes/requirements, and can properly install a new bath, as well as design it.

"A qualified bathroom designer has the knowledge and experience required to get the job done right," says Platek.

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