

HDB renovation permit rules: noisy works 9am-5pm on weekdays only, and 3 months to finish a new flat

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Planning to hack a wall or swap the bathroom tiles? The HDB renovation permit rules decide what you can do, when your contractor can make noise and how long the job may run. Noisy works are allowed only on weekdays from 9am to 5pm, and a new flat must be finished within 3 months of approval. These details come from HDBâ??s MyNiceHome guide, so check them before you sign a contract.

Getting this wrong is expensive. Work stops, neighbours complain and your timeline slips, which is a nasty surprise when you are paying rent elsewhere.

Which works need a permit under the HDB renovation permit rules

As the owner, you must have every required permit before works begin. Your contractor can submit the application online for you, and HDB sends an SMS once it receives it. You can follow the status on the Check Renovation Permit e-Service.

HDB lists these as regulated works:

- Removing and replacing floor finishes, or raising floor levels, in the kitchen, balcony, bathroom or toilet
- Hacking down or altering any wall
- Replacing the main entrance door if it faces a staircase or lift lobby, since this is a fire escape route
- Moving doors within the flat
- Installing or replacing windows

Plans, elevations or sections are needed if you are removing or repositioning fittings, or hacking or building walls. A glass shower screen needs no permit, as long as the floor slab is not damaged during installation.



Source: HDB MyNiceHome

Hours for noisy and general works

HDB splits the day into two types of work. Plan your schedule around them, because a contractor who turns up on the wrong day cannot start.

- General works such as plastering and floor screed: Monday to Saturday, 9am to 6pm, not on Sundays or public holidays
- Noisy works such as demolishing walls or removing finishes: Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, not on weekends, public holidays or the eve of major public holidays

HDB also asks you to have your contractor notify neighbours, especially those most affected. A short note on the lift lobby notice board goes a long way, and it is the kind of courtesy that avoids a visit from the town council.

Doors, windows, air-con and bathrooms: the details that catch people out

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The main door rule is the one many owners miss. If your door faces a staircase or lift lobby, the replacement and its frame must be half-hour fire-rated and fitted with a door closer. You also cannot create a new entrance through reinforced concrete walls.

For bathrooms and toilets in a BTO flat, wall or floor finishes cannot be removed for 3 years after move-in, to protect the waterproofing. You can lay new tiles over the existing ones instead. Changes after that period need a permit.

Window works must be done by a BCA-approved window contractor. Air-conditioners must be installed by a BCA-trained installer, and you stay responsible for the installation being safe and stable. No permit is needed for air-con if the flat can already handle the higher electrical load, which generally means flats built after 1 January 1994 or those with MUP or HIP upgrades. Otherwise, check your blockâ??s electrical loading.



Source: HDB MyNiceHome

Contractors, timelines and what you must never touch

Your renovation contractor must be listed in the HDB Directory of Renovation Contractors. After approval, works must be completed within 3 months for new flats and 1 month for existing flats.

The household shelter is off limits. Do not hack or drill its walls, and keep the door intact and operable at all times. We covered how to look after that door in our guide to the HDB household shelter door.

A few more things HDB says you cannot do:

- Hog lifts, block lift doors or insert objects into them
- Do noisy works outside the permitted days and hours
- Throw bulky items away through ordinary channels. Contact your town council, and make sure your contractor disposes of debris properly

A quick checklist before the first hammer swings

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Source: HDB MyNiceHome

- Confirm your contractor is on the HDB Directory of Renovation Contractors
- Ask them to submit the permit application, then check the status on the e-Service
- Match the works schedule to the weekday-only noisy hours
- Tell your neighbours before demolition starts

- Keep the shelter, and the fire-rated entrance door if you have one, out of the design plan

Moving in soon? Our HDB home fire safety checklist is a good companion read, and the PUB Water Saver Pack leak check helps once the new taps and toilet are in. The MyNiceHome page does not cover renovation fees or the defects liability period, so ask HDB or your contractor about those directly.

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