

Sacramento Kitchen Remodel Risk Management Guide

Permits & Codes



- Local building codes
- Required permits
- Inspection scheduling
- Code compliance

Budget & Timeline



- Budget planning
- Cost tracking
- Timeline management
- Contingency fund

Structural & Safety



- Load-bearing walls
- Electrical safety
- Plumbing checks
- Material quality

Contractor Vetting



- License verification
- Insurance review
- References check
- Contract review

Before-You-Demo Kitchen Remodel Checklist

A comprehensive pre-demolition guide for Sacramento homeowners and design professionals

This checklist is designed to prevent the most common and costly mistakes in Sacramento kitchen remodels — from permit delays to mid-project surprises. Do not authorize demolition until every section is resolved.

1. Jurisdiction & Permit Gate (Non-Negotiable)

Demo should not begin until this section is resolved.

Identify jurisdiction in writing:

- City of Sacramento
- Sacramento County (unincorporated)

Confirm permit pathway:

- Kitchen-only vs structural/MEP revision
- Online portal identified (Accela City vs County)

Permits required confirmed:

- Electrical (panel, circuits, appliance loads)
- Plumbing (fixture moves, venting)
- Mechanical (hood ducting, termination)
- Structural (wall changes, beam modifications)

Inspection sequence mapped:

- Rough electrical
- Rough plumbing
- Rough mechanical
- Insulation (if impacted)
- Final

✓ Success: You can point to a written permit/inspection plan and name who schedules each inspection.

■ *In Sacramento, projects stall most often at rough-in inspection because the permit scope didn't match what was actually opened up.*

2. Contractor Credential Verification (Risk Containment)

This protects you financially when something goes wrong.

- CSLB license verified (printout saved)
- License classification matches scope (not just 'active')

General liability insurance certificate:

- Current
- Matches contracting entity
- Workers' comp certificate verified
- Subcontractor insurance policy confirmed (if subs used)
- Homeowner named as additional insured where applicable

✓ Success: A dated credentials folder exists before demo.

■ *I've seen clients lose weeks because an uninsured sub caused damage and work had to stop while liability was sorted out.*

3. Electrical Reality Check (Sacramento Failure Hotspot)

Most 'surprise costs' start here.

- Existing panel photographed and labeled
- Panel amperage confirmed
- Available breaker capacity confirmed

Dedicated circuits mapped for:

- Refrigerator
- Dishwasher
- Microwave / speed oven
- Range / cooktop
- Hood
- Under-cabinet lighting
- Appliance cut sheets collected before demo
- Lighting plan finalized (fixture types, counts, locations)
- Title 24 lighting compliance checked (Part 6)

✓ **Success: Electrical scope matches appliance + lighting plan before walls are opened.**

- *In older East Sac and Land Park homes, panel upgrades are one of the most common mid-project derailments.*

4. Plumbing & Venting Verification

Once walls are open, decisions become expensive.

- Existing supply and drain locations documented
- Venting path confirmed (not 'we'll figure it out')
- Sink, dishwasher, and fridge water lines coordinated

Hood duct route identified:

- Diameter confirmed
- Termination location approved
- Conflicts with framing resolved
- Makeup air requirement evaluated (if applicable)

✓ **Success: No plumbing or venting decisions remain 'to be decided later.'**

5. Cabinetry & Tolerance Control

This is where precision matters.

- Final cabinet layout approved
- Appliance specs locked and integrated
- Wall plumbness checked
- Floor levelness checked
- Scribing strategy agreed
- Cabinet install standards defined (plumb/level tolerances)
- Pre-install 'dry run' planned (first boxes only)

✓ **Success: Cabinets are fabricated to verified field conditions, not assumptions.**

■ *I've seen stone slabs crack because cabinets were installed on an unflattened floor. That mistake starts before demo.*

6. Stone & Finish Dependency Mapping

Stone and finishes do not forgive sequencing errors.

- Stone type selected with performance in mind
- Seam locations planned
- Overhang support requirements defined
- Templating scheduled after cabinet leveling sign-off
- Tile layout coordinated with outlets and edges
- Waterproofing details reviewed for wet zones

✓ **Success: Finish materials are reacting to reality, not compensating for it.**

7. Living-in-Place Operations Plan (If Occupied)

This is an operations problem, not a lifestyle one.

- Dust containment strategy defined
- Barrier locations shown
- Debris path identified
- Daily cleanup responsibility assigned

Temporary kitchen plan mapped:

- Power source
- Refrigeration
- Coffee / food prep
- Dishwashing solution
- Safety zones defined (kids, pets, circulation)

✓ **Success: You can function daily without crossing the active construction zone.**

■ *I now require this because I've seen families spend more on eating out than they expected to save by 'skipping' a temporary kitchen.*

8. Contract & Change-Order Controls

This is how projects stay sane.

- Scope broken into line items
- Explicit exclusions listed
- Allowances minimized and documented

Change-order process defined:

- Written only
- Pricing approved before work proceeds
- Payment schedule tied to milestones, not dates
- Warranty terms documented

✓ **Success: No work can proceed on verbal approvals.**

9. Demo Authorization Gate (Final Check)

Demo is a point of no return.

Demo is approved ONLY if:

- Permits are in progress or issued
- Electrical capacity confirmed
- Appliance specs locked
- Cabinet layout finalized
- Living-in-place plan signed
- Protection measures installed

■ **If any of the above is missing, demo is premature.**