



PAULA'S CLEANING
Professional Cleaners

PAULA'S CLEANING GUIDE:

RENOVATING OR BUILDING MADE SIMPLE (ADUS INCLUDED!)



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THIS GUIDE COVERS:

Step 1: Define Your Renovation Goals

Step 2: Talk to Your Local Building Inspector Early

Step 3: Map Out a Smart Renovation Plan

Step 4: Price and Choose the Right Subcontractors

Step 5: Budgeting and Financing Without Surprises

Step 6: Scheduling and Coordinating Contractors

Step 7: Navigating the Permitting Process

Step 8: Inspections and Staying Compliant

Step 9: Obtaining Your Certificate of Occupancy (CO)

Example Cleaning: Putting It All Together

Final Touches: The Finishing Touch That Changes Everything



Step 1: Define Your Renovation Goals

Every successful ADU or home renovation starts with a clear vision. Before you call a contractor or buy materials, take time to evaluate which areas of your home need the most attention and what you hope to achieve with the renovation.

Search for inspiration on Pinterest, Google, or renovation blogs to build a realistic wish list. Think about both functionality and aesthetics—will this ADU be for guests, rental income, or extra family space? Visualizing how the space will be used helps you make better design choices now and avoid costly changes later.



It's also smart to study common challenges other homeowners face when adding ADUs or remodeling—things like maximizing storage in small spaces, selecting easy-to-clean materials, or ensuring proper ventilation.

At Paula's Cleaning Services, we always recommend considering maintenance and cleaning as part of your renovation goals. Choosing durable, low-maintenance surfaces now will make post-construction cleaning easier and keep your new space looking fresh for years to come.



Step 2: Talk to Your Local Building Inspector Early

Before swinging a hammer or ordering materials, make sure to talk with your local building inspector. A quick conversation now can save you weeks of delays later.

Explain your project, ask questions, and understand the basic code requirements for ADUs or renovations. Some inspectors will even visit your property, helping you determine if walls are structural or just partitions a detail that can drastically affect both your budget and timeline.

The sooner you clarify these points, the smoother the entire process will be. Skipping this step is one of the most common mistakes homeowners make, often leading to expensive revisions or stop-work orders.



At Paula's Cleaning Services, we've cleaned many post-renovation homes where construction was delayed because of missed inspections or unexpected code violations. Getting inspector approval upfront not only speeds up the build but also gets you to the final stage — moving into a clean, ready-to-use ADU — much faster.

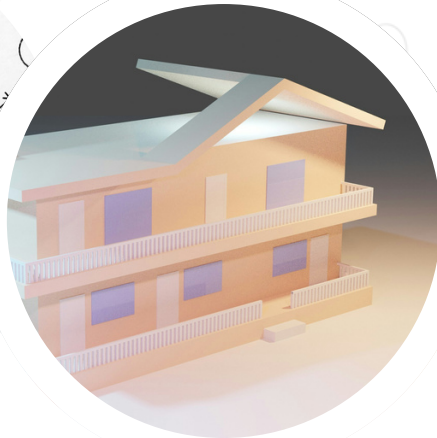
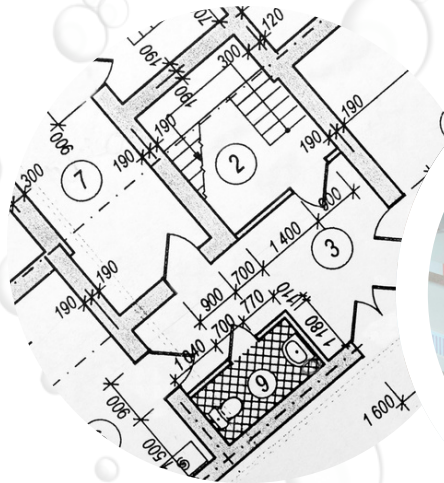


Step 3: Map Out a Smart Renovation Plan

Once you know what you want and have the inspector's feedback, it's time to create a solid plan. A well-thought-out plan isn't just about pretty designs. It's about making sure everything works together, from structure to utilities.

If you're removing walls, consult a structural engineer to determine if they are load-bearing. For non-load-bearing walls, some inspectors may approve a simple hand-drawn plan, which saves money on professional design work.

Don't forget to include electrical and plumbing considerations at this stage. Moving walls often means rerouting pipes and wires, which can quickly drive up costs if not planned ahead. Your plan should also outline a realistic timeline, material choices, and a contingency budget for surprises.



At Paula's Cleaning Services, we always encourage homeowners to choose finishes and layouts that are not only beautiful but easy to maintain. For example, smooth surfaces and moisture-resistant materials make post-construction cleaning faster and help your ADU stay fresh and inviting for longer.



Step 4: Price and Choose the Right Subcontractors

With your plan ready, the next step is to set a realistic budget and hire the right professionals. Instead of relying on a single contractor for everything, consider breaking the work into specialized tasks. For example, you can hire a kitchen contractor just for cabinets and countertops, while managing demolition, electrical, and plumbing work with individual subcontractors.

This approach can save you a significant amount of money, but it also requires good scheduling skills. Delays with one subcontractor can quickly push back your entire timeline, so get multiple quotes, compare services, and keep a strict schedule.

If you're not handling the work yourself, make sure to get a detailed quote from a framing carpenter for wall removal or structural changes. Track every expense and anticipate possible material cost fluctuations.

At Paula's Cleaning Services, we often arrive after ADU and home renovation projects are completed. One thing we notice is that organized, well-coordinated jobs always leave less post-construction mess and fewer cleaning challenges. Proper planning doesn't just save money, it ensures your space is ready to enjoy (and easier to clean) sooner.



Step 5: Budgeting and Financing Without Surprises

Financing an ADU or renovation can be tricky, so start with a detailed, realistic budget. Always include a cushion for unexpected expenses opening walls, moving plumbing, or adjusting architectural plans often uncovers surprises like hidden leaks or outdated wiring.

DIY projects can save money upfront, but weigh whether the time, stress, and potential for costly mistakes are worth it. Professional teams may seem expensive, but they usually work faster and avoid those “nightmare” discoveries that blow a budget in hours.

When financing through a bank, explore these common options:

- ✓ **203K or Renovation Loan** – Ideal if you’re buying and renovating at the same time.
- ✓ **Home Equity Loan** – Best for homeowners with existing equity; often interest-only for the first 10 years.
- ✓ **Unsecured Home Improvement Loan** – Offered by some construction companies, sometimes with low or zero interest, and no equity required.
- ✓ **Personal Savings or Credit Line** – Flexible if you have available funds.



Step 6: Scheduling and Coordinating Contractors

Once your budget and financing are ready, it's time to bring your plan to life. Contact your subcontractors, confirm their availability, and build a realistic timeline — but leave room for flexibility. Renovation schedules almost always change, and having extra “buffer time” keeps things moving smoothly instead of creating last-minute chaos.

Keep in close communication with your subcontractors. Let them know where they stand in the sequence, and give them updates regularly. If one finishes ahead of schedule and the next is available early, you can move things up — saving days or even weeks. Subcontractors generally don't mind frequent calls or texts, as long as you're respectful and clear.

If there's a delay in any part of the project, notify everyone affected right away. This transparency helps maintain the continuity of the work and keeps frustrations low.

Many homeowners underestimate how much organization and communication go into running a project. After managing even one ADU or home renovation, you'll likely have a whole new respect for the work general contractors (GCs) do.



Step 7: Navigating the Permitting Process

Before you even apply for a building permit, think about waste and septic requirements. If your home has a septic system and you're adding a new bedroom or bathroom (not just renovating an existing one), you'll likely need Board of Health (BOH) approval. Sometimes, this means upgrading your septic system, which can be expensive.

For example, if you have a four-bedroom septic system but only three current bedrooms, adding one more is usually fine. But going from four to five bedrooms may trigger a system upgrade. To avoid surprises, talk to a BOH agent before hiring a civil engineer. They can give helpful guidance, though remember their advice isn't legally binding.



Once BOH approval is secured, it's finally permit time. Apply for a building permit at least a month before starting your project. Typically, you'll need:

- ✓ A property record card (from the tax collector)
- ✓ A copy of your deed
- ✓ House plans or design drawings
- ✓ A property survey or septic design (if applicable)

Each town has its own checklist, so review it carefully. If you get stuck, a carpenter or contractor may assist you for a fee. Once approved, congratulations! you're officially the general contractor of your ADU or renovation project!

 The Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Board of Building Regulations And Standards Massachusetts State Building Code 780 CMR	City of Everett Massachusetts Building Permit Application Application to Construct, Repair Renovate, Change the Use or Occupancy Of, or Demolish any Building																		
THIS SECTION FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY																			
Building Permit Number: _____ Date: _____																			
Signature: _____ Date: _____ Building Commissioner/Inspector of Buildings																			
SECTION 1 SITE INFORMATION																			
1.1 Property Address: _____	1.2 Assessors Map & Parcel Number: _____ Map _____ Parcel _____ Tax _____																		
1.3 Zoning Information: _____	1.4 Property Dimensions: _____ Lot Area (S.F.) _____ Frontage (Ft.) _____																		
1.5 Building Setbacks (Ft.)																			
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1.8 Sewage Disposal System: Municipal ☐ On Site Disposal ☐																			
SECTION 2 PROPERTY OWNERSHIP/AUTHORIZED AGENT																			
2.1 Owner of Record:																			
Name (Please Print) _____ Address: _____																			
Signature: _____ Phone Number: _____																			
2.2 Authorized Agent:																			
Name (Please Print) _____ Address: _____																			
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SECTION 3 CONSTRUCTION SERVICES FOR PROJECTS LESS THAN 35,000 CUBIC FEET OF ENCLOSED SPACE																			
3.1 Licensed Holder Information:	Not Applicable ☐																		
License Holder _____	License Number _____																		
Address _____ Zip Code _____	Expiration Date: _____																		
Signature _____ Phone Number _____	UCSL RCSL MCSL RCCSL WSCSL SFCS L DCSL ICSL																		
3.2 Registered Home Improvement Contractor:																			
Company Name: _____		Registration Number: _____																	
Address _____ Zip Code _____	Expiration Date: _____																		
Signature _____ Phone Number _____																			

(Building permit application example)

Step 8: Inspections and Staying Compliant

Once your permit is approved, the next step is ensuring your project passes all required inspections. Your building permit will list them, but requirements can vary by town, so study your local rules carefully to avoid surprises.

Here's a typical sequence we see in many ADU and renovation projects:

Foundation and Structural Checks

- Cellar Hole (future basement): After the footings are set, but before pouring.
- Footing & Foundation Walls: You'll need a certified foundation plan from your surveyor. Before inspection, the walls should be poured, the foundation sealed, and the perimeter drain installed. Backfill only after approval, then have the site contractor complete the rough grade.

Rough Installations

- Rough Electrical & Rough Plumbing: Complete these before scheduling the framing inspection. For bathrooms, make sure traps are installed before closing walls.



- Framing: Even if the permit lists framing before plumbing or electrical, inspectors usually require both to be done first. Heating systems, plumbing drops, fire caulking, and foam insulation behind switch boxes must also be completed before this step.

Finishing Stages

- Insulation: If minor framing issues weren't approved earlier, this is your second chance to have them checked.
- Finished Plumbing & Finished Electrical: These must pass before moving to final approvals.
- Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Inspection: Schedule with your local fire department at least two weeks in advance due to potential backlogs.

Final Inspection & Certificate of Occupancy (CO)

The last step is the final inspection, once approved, you'll receive your Certificate of Occupancy and can officially move into your new ADU or renovated space.

Keeping a detailed inspection log, listing what's complete, pending, and scheduled — can save you delays and confusion.

At Paula's Cleaning Services, we recommend scheduling your post-construction cleaning right after the final inspection. A thorough clean removes construction dust, protects your finishes, and ensures your home is fresh, healthy, and move-in ready the moment you get that CO in hand.



Step 9: Obtaining Your Certificate of Occupancy CO

Once all your final inspections are complete, the last step is to secure your Certificate of Occupancy (CO). Some towns require you to submit a written request and pay a processing fee, while others automatically issue the CO after passing the final inspection. It's always best to allow 1-2 days after your final inspection before picking it up.

If your contractor handled the project, you might need a final walkthrough to close out any punch list items, small details like touch-up painting, loose hardware, or adjustments to cabinetry, before officially completing the job.



Example Project: Turning a Basement into an ADU

Take, for instance, a recent basement-to-ADU conversion in Massachusetts:

- Scope: Converting an unfinished basement into a full one-bedroom apartment with a bathroom and kitchenette for rental income.
- Key Inspections: Rough plumbing and electrical, insulation, framing, and a final smoke & carbon monoxide inspection.
- Timeline: 6 months from permit approval to final inspection.
- CO Process: After the final inspection, the homeowner submitted a written request, paid a \$75 processing fee, and picked up the CO two days later.
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The CO not only made the unit legally habitable but also allowed the homeowner to list it immediately for rental, turning the renovation into a new income stream.



Installing the Well and Preparing the Lot

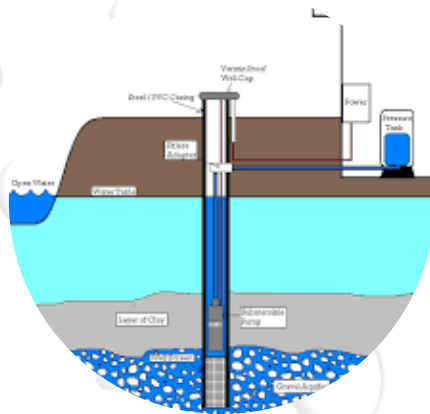
Before you can receive a building permit, the well must be installed, tested, and approved by the Board of Health (BOH). A surveyor should stake the well location to protect your water supply and, if possible, also mark the house corners, septic tank, and trench locations to avoid repeated visits (and extra costs).

The Well:

- Stakes protect underground piping for the well and sewage.
- If your project is on wetlands, you'll need silt fencing and hay bales as required by an Order of Conditions from the Conservation Commission.

Lot Preparation:

- For wooded or remote lots, clear trees and create temporary access paths for construction vehicles.
- Include lot clearing in your budget, it's often overlooked.



Building the Cellar

With the lot prepared, it's time to break ground and build the cellar. Start by having the cellar hole dug and check with your site contractor if ramps are needed for concrete trucks. In some cases, like our example project, you may need a pump truck to pour concrete into the forms, expect an additional cost of around \$900-\$1,200.

Once the concrete is in place, you're ready for the Cellar Hole Inspection. After passing, you can move to the next crucial steps:

- Install the bulkhead to conceal wiring, plumbing, or HVAC you don't want visible in the basement.
- Add the perimeter drain to manage water flow and protect the foundation.
- Seal the foundation thoroughly to prevent moisture infiltration.
- Schedule the Footing and Foundation Walls Inspection before proceeding to framing.



Framing

Once the foundation is inspected and approved, it's time to move on to framing, which sets the structure for your ADU or renovation.

Planning and Material Delivery

- Set your start date and contact a lumber supplier early. Place your initial order and schedule delivery for the night before or the morning of the start date.
- Give your framing contractor the supplier's contact information so they can request resupply orders as the job progresses.

Installing the Exterior Barrier

Once the framing is complete, you'll need to install a protective barrier between the exterior and interior of the house. Two common options are zip-lock sheathing or Tyvek, which protect against moisture and air leaks.

Coordinating Other Contractors

Two days before the framing is finished, notify your roofer, plumber, electrician, HVAC contractor, and siding contractor that they are "on deck." Remind them to bring their own generators if power isn't available.

- Order your kitchen early. High-value items like cabinetry and appliances can take time to arrive, and you'll want them ready as soon as painting is finished.



Best Practice: Framing and Roofing Coordination

To follow best industry practices:

- Schedule the roofer and framer to work simultaneously.
- The framer should install first-story windows while the roofer completes final checks.
- Once the roof is finished, the framer can install the second-story windows.
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By the end of this step, the frame and roof will be complete, setting you up for the siding phase.

At Paula's Cleaning Services, we recommend keeping the framing area as clean as possible during this phase. Fewer wood scraps and dust accumulation now mean less work later when it's time for the deep post-construction cleaning, helping you move into your ADU faster.



Siding

With the framing and roof complete, it's time to move to the siding phase, which also sets up important utility connections.

Starting with the Electric Meter Side

Begin by having the siding contractor work on the side of the house where the electric meter will be installed. Coordinate closely with your electrician to ensure:

- The meter and electrical panel are installed as soon as possible.
- Contact your local electric company to set up a service request number early.

Once the meter is installed and approved by the inspector, you'll no longer need to rely on generators at the site, a big milestone for the project.

Calling the Site Contractor Back

Bring your site contractor back to:

- Connect the home's water and sewage systems to the well and septic tank.
- Rough in the driveway, which usually happens before interior finishes begin.
- After this, you'll say goodbye to your site contractor until the final stages of construction.



Interior Work in Parallel

While exterior siding is being installed, several other trades can work simultaneously:

- Plumber and HVAC contractor can proceed with their installations.
- The electrician works after them, wiring around pipes and ductwork (not the other way around).
- Notify your insulation contractor that they are "on deck" for fire caulking once these steps are complete.

When finished, you'll have completed the Rough Electric and Plumbing inspections, another key step closer to finishing your ADU.

At Paula's Cleaning Services, we recommend keeping debris and dust under control during this busy phase. A cleaner site ensures fewer delays and a smoother transition to the final deep cleaning, giving you a fresh, move-in-ready space right after the last inspection.



Final Touches

After months of planning and hard work, you're finally in the home stretch. This phase is about inspections, finishing details, and making sure your ADU or renovated space is 100% ready for use.

Inspections and Wall Finishes

- Order the Rough Framing Inspection. The inspector will check all drilled holes from plumbing and electrical work to ensure there are no structural compromises.
- Once approved, let the insulation team and sheetrocker know they're "on deck."
- After insulation is complete, schedule the Insulation Inspection.
- With drywall in place, painters can begin personalizing the interior.

Installing Key Fixtures and Flooring

- After painting, the kitchen company and electrician can install cabinets, appliances, and finish electrical work.
- Call the flooring company to install floors. Remind your plumber to be ready immediately afterward, toilets and bathroom fixtures must be installed on top of finished flooring.

Final Details Inside and Out

- Once plumbing is finished, the flooring team can return to lay carpets, and painters will do their final touch-ups.



Final Touches

Final Inspections and Certificate of Occupancy

- Schedule the Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Detector Inspection with your local fire department.
- Book the Final Plumbing and Electrical Inspections with the city.
- Finally, arrange for your Certificate of Occupancy (CO) Inspection. Once approved, you'll officially be able to live in, rent, or showcase your new ADU.

Paula's Cleaning Tip: Make Your Move-In Perfect

At this point, most homeowners are exhausted, but this is when a professional deep clean makes all the difference. At Paula's Cleaning Services, we specialize in post-construction cleaning, ensuring every surface is dust-free, appliances are polished, and your space feels brand-new. We handle the final layer of perfection, so you can move in and enjoy your new ADU stress-free.



Final Thoughts

With permits, inspections, and contractor coordination handled, your project is set up for success. Whether you managed everything yourself or hired professionals, the keys to a smooth process are always the same: planning, budgeting, and communication.

Be patient and flexible, and tackle problems as they come, renovations can be stressful, but a well-managed project will leave you with a home that's more functional, beautiful, and valuable.

A Major Accomplishment

Building a new space or completing a major renovation is no small feat congratulations on making it this far! Like many big life goals, the steps look simple on paper, but in reality, there are tough days, unexpected challenges, and a steep learning curve. If you stay adaptable and keep your goals in mind, the end result is always worth it.

The Reality of DIY vs. Professional Help

Coming from years in the industry, I've seen both sides. Homeowners often start with enthusiasm, excited to save money with DIY work, but halfway through, many realize how easy it is to miss critical details, like scheduling an electrical inspection, and end up tearing down finished walls just to meet code.



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If you're up for the challenge and the potential savings, good luck, it's an experience you'll never forget. But if things ever get overwhelming, remember that professional help is only a call away.

Paula's Cleaning Services: Here When You Need Us

Whether you did everything yourself or worked with a full team of contractors, one thing remains true: your new space deserves to shine from day one. At Paula's Cleaning Services, we help homeowners with post-construction cleaning, making sure every surface is dust-free, every corner spotless, and your ADU is truly move-in ready.



Need Help? We're Here for You!

You don't have to do it all alone.

At Paula's Cleaning, we care for your home as if it were our own. Get in touch and find out which cleaning schedule fits your lifestyle best:

Weekly Cleaning, Biweekly Cleaning or Monthly Cleaning

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