



Project Survival Guide

The team at Contractors Direct want you to have the best chance of success for your renovation project, so we have put our heads together to share some help and advice. We're here to help you survive it with your sanity intact. Let this journal guide you, and when the dust settles, please let us know how it all went. Enjoy the ride!

Stay Connected

For expert tips, verified contractors, and ongoing project support:

Visit: contractors.direct

Email: info@contractors.direct

Follow us on social media for project inspiration, design insight, and community stories from homeowners just like you.



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"Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication." - Leonardo da Vinci.

How to Use This Book

You can track your project here, step by step through the stages to completion, and it is filled with helpful advice, guidance, checklists, and note pages.

This isn't a rulebook. It's a roadmap, a diary, a stress journal, and your new favourite project sidekick.

"The details are not the details. They make the design." – Charles Eames

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“A room should never allow the eye to settle in one place. It should smile at you and create fantasy.”
– Juan Montoya

Quick Notes

First visit or meeting

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.” – Abraham Lincoln

Quick Notes

First visit or meeting

“Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful.”

- William Morris

Meet Your Team

Contact information

Main Contractor

Project Manager

Designer

Suppliers

“Learn to look not just with your eyes but with your heart. Find the things that connect with you. How else will you know how to design your home?” – Kelly Hoppen

Notes

"We shape our homes and then our homes shape us." - Winston Churchill.

Things To Consider Before You Renovate

Define Your Why

Before you dive into Pinterest boards, figure out why you're renovating.

Is it to add value before selling, create more space, or finally have that dream kitchen?

Knowing your why will keep every decision focused.

☐ I've written down my goals for this renovation.

Set a Realistic Budget (Then Add 15%)

Every project has surprises. Some pleasant, and some less so.

Plan your budget. Then add a 10–15% buffer for the inevitable.

☐ I've outlined my total budget and included a contingency fund.

Decide What You'll Handle, and What You Won't

Enthusiasm fades quickly when approvals, plumbers, and project timelines collide.

Be honest: what can you manage yourself, and what needs a pro?

☐ I've decided which parts I'll manage and where I need expert help.

Check Permissions Early

In Dubai, approvals can take longer than you think.

Before you start, check if your project needs NOCs from developers or authorities (Trakhees, DCD, etc.).

Our project managers can guide you through the maze.

☐ I've confirmed which permissions and NOCs are required.

Gather Inspiration (But Stay Practical)

Collect reference photos, materials, and styles you love, and think about how they'll actually live in your space.

☐ I've saved practical and realistic inspiration for my space.

Choose the Right Contractor, Not the Cheapest

A low quote can be tempting, but cost-cutting now often means redoing work later.

☐ I've compared more than one quote and checked contractor credentials.

Plan Around Your Life

Renovation disrupts routines.

If possible, schedule around holidays, school terms, or quieter work periods.

You'll thank yourself later.

☐ I've thought about how renovation timing affects daily life.

Communicate Clearly (and Often)

Misunderstandings can delay projects and drain patience.

Set a clear communication rhythm of regular updates, WhatsApp groups, and site visits, so everyone stays aligned.

☐ I've established how and when to communicate with my contractor.

Prepare Yourself Mentally

Renovations are exciting, but they can also test your patience.

There will be dust. There will be delays. But there will also be your dream space at the end.

☐ I'm ready for the journey

Notes

Think about goals, timelines, and priorities

“One should never be the oldest thing in one’s house.” – Patsy Stone

Notes

"What do I want this space to feel like?"

"What's non-negotiable?"

"What could I compromise on?"

"Only put off until tomorrow what you are willing to die having left undone." - Pablo Picasso

Budget Planner

Use this planner to map out expected costs, track real spending, and keep your project under control

Project Type	Estimated Cost	Priority H/M/L	Notes

Surprise! Remember to add a contingency buffer for that surprise line item - we suggest 10 - 15%

Notes

"What matters to me most about this renovation?"

"Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great." - John D. Rockefeller

Track Your Payments

Keep every invoice and payment logged here, avoid confusion over what's been paid (or not).

Notes										
Invoice Number										
Due Date										
paid Y/N										
Amount AED										
Description										
Contractor / supplier										

"Good design is obvious. Great design is invisible." – Joe Sparano

Review & Reflect

At the end of your project, review where the money went.

Were there areas you could've saved or where the splurge was worth it?

Make notes here, you'll thank yourself for future projects.

Pro Tips from Project People:

Cheap tiles look expensive, until they crack.

Always buy extra flooring or tiles. You'll never find the same batch twice.

The most expensive contractor isn't always the best, but the cheapest one usually costs you later.

Choosing a Contractor

1. Check the Licence. Then Check It Again

In the UAE, all contractors must hold active trade licences, with specific approvals depending on project type and location.

Essential checks

- Must hold a valid Dubai Economic Department (DED) or free-zone licence with relevant activity codes (e.g., technical services, interior decoration).
- Should be registered with Dubai Municipality (DM) for projects in onshore areas, or with DDA, Trakhees, or DIFC for free-zone sites.
- Fire and life safety works. They must be Dubai Civil Defence (DCD) approved.

Tip: Ask for the trade licence copy and DCD certificate-any hesitation is a red flag.

2. Ask for Local Project Experience

Just because a contractor has worked overseas, or in residential villas, doesn't mean they're ready for your Grade A office, F&B outlet or mall unit.

What to verify

- At least 3–5 relevant UAE commercial projects completed in the last 2 years.
- Experience with your sector: retail, F&B, office, clinic, hospitality, or education.
- Demonstrated success working in your specific area (Downtown, DIFC, JLT, Business Bay, etc.).

Free zones like DIFC and TECOM have stricter approvals-don't be your contractor's first rodeo. It can be very painful.

3. Review Their Authority Approval Process

A good contractor doesn't just build, they navigate Dubai's approval maze.

From building permits to DEWA and DCD inspections, your contractor must own the process end-to-end.

What to ask

- "Do you prepare and submit all authority drawings in-house?"
- "Who handles re-submissions if Dubai Municipality or DCD requests changes?"
- "Can you show me a full permit timeline from a past project?"

Delays in approvals can cost thousands in rent if your rent-free period runs out before site works begin.

4. Clarify the Project Team Structure

In the UAE, it's common for a contracting company to win the job and then subcontract the entire project to a third party.

You want to know exactly who's delivering your fit-out and who'll be managing your timeline.

Sub-contracting isn't bad, but you want to know up front who is doing what for you.

Ask them to name:

- Project Manager - Your day-to-day contact. Should speak fluent English and have authority experience.
- Site Supervisor - On-site full time. Should be qualified in UAE HSE and MEP coordination.
- In-house team vs. subcontractors – Know who's supposed to be turning up each day.

All Contractors Direct contractors are vetted for delivery capability and provide clear site hierarchy for all projects.

5. Scrutinise the Programme of Works

A vague timeline = a vague contractor.

A solid programme should include:

- Authority approvals with estimated durations
- MEP works (first fix, testing, commissioning)
- Joinery/furniture delivery lead times
- Inspection, snagging and final certification

Projects with a detailed programme are 40% more likely to hand over on time.

6. Understand the Payment Terms

If a contractor asks you to pay for anything up front, other than a mobilisation fee, question it. There has to be a transaction to get things moving but always tie payments to deliverables. Reputable UAE contractors offer structured milestone payments tied to actual work delivered.

Ideal payment plan

- 10% mobilization
- 20–30% upon material delivery/start of site works
- 30–40% across construction milestones
- 10% retention held until final approval & completion certificate

Always align payments with physical progress, never pay for verbal promises.

7. Ask for Warranty & Post-Handover Support

Once the keys are handed over, your fit-out isn't finished.

Good contractors offer a warranty period and will return to fix snags or system faults, great ones plan for it from day one.

What to confirm

- A 12-month defects liability period is standard in the UAE.
- Clarify response time for repairs or urgent system issues (e.g., AC breakdown).
- Ensure you receive as-built drawings, operation manuals, and warranty documents.

8. Validate Insurance and HSE Compliance

Accidents on site are your liability if your contractor isn't insured.

Make sure their team is protected, and your project is too.

Documents to request

- Contractor All-Risk (CAR) insurance
- Public Liability cover
- Employee Workmen's Compensation
- HSE plan compliant with UAE Labour Law and Dubai Municipality guidelines

Landlords often request these documents before issuing final approvals or site access cards.

Spot The Signs

Know what to look for

5 Red Flags in a Contractor's Quote

Unusually Low Price

If one bid is dramatically lower than the others, it's often a sign of cut corners or hidden costs waiting to surface.

Vague Scope of Work

Beware of quotes that lack detail on materials, finishes, or timelines. Ambiguity leaves room for costly variations later.

Excessive Provisional Sums

A quote padded with provisional items means you'll likely face higher bills once work is underway.

No Mention of Permits or Approvals

In Dubai, proper documentation is non-negotiable. If permits aren't mentioned, you could be liable later.

Too-Good-to-Be-True Timelines

If a contractor promises to deliver a full fit-out in half the time of competitors, expect delays or compromises in quality.

5 Green Flags in a Contractor's Quote

Detailed Scope of Work

Clear breakdowns of materials, finishes, labour, and timelines show professionalism and reduce the risk of disputes.

Transparent Pricing Structure

Line-item costs, rather than lump sums, demonstrate transparency and make it easier to compare quotes fairly.

References to Compliance

Inclusion of permits, insurances, and Dubai Municipality approvals indicates you're working with a contractor who plays by the rules.

Realistic Timeline

A schedule that factors in approvals, procurement, and site work reflects experience and reduces nasty surprises.

Warranty or Aftercare Commitment

Contractors who guarantee their work are confident in their quality, and give you peace of mind.

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea." - Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Checklist

Verify Credentials and Experience

Always ensure your contractor is properly licensed, insured, and experienced in projects similar to yours. Request documentation such as trade licenses, insurance certificates, and relevant project portfolios.

- ☐ Verified trade license
- ☐ Valid insurance coverage
- ☐ Proven experience in relevant project type

Request and Review References

Ask for references from previous clients and take the time to follow up. Inquire about the contractor's reliability, communication, and adherence to timelines and budgets. Real feedback provides valuable insight into professionalism and consistency.

- ☐ Contacted at least two previous clients
- ☐ Recorded notes on performance and communication

Compare Detailed Quotes

Obtain at least three detailed quotations to compare scope, materials, and pricing. Avoid accepting quotes that are significantly lower than the others, as this often indicates missing details or lower quality standards. Contractors Direct provides side-by-side comparisons for full transparency.

- ☐ Minimum of three quotations reviewed
- ☐ Scope, inclusions, and exclusions clearly outlined

Evaluate Current Work Quality

If possible, request to visit an active project site or review recent completion photos. Assess the organisation, cleanliness, and attention to detail, they are strong indicators of work quality and professionalism.

- ☐ Visited or reviewed an active project site
- ☐ Observed work quality and site management

Review Contract Details Thoroughly

A professional contractor will provide a clear and comprehensive contract. Review all details carefully, including payment schedules, deliverables, timelines, warranties, and penalties for delays. Ensure both parties agree on scope and expectations before work begins.

- ☐ Written contract signed by both parties
- ☐ Payment milestones and warranties confirmed

Identify Warning Signs

Be cautious of contractors who request large advance payments, avoid contracts, or promise to start immediately without proper planning or approvals. Professional contractors will always prioritise documentation and compliance.

- ☐ Verified all terms and approvals before payment
- ☐ No concerning practices identified

Choose Trust and Alignment Over Price

While cost is a key consideration, reliability, communication, and accountability are equally important. Select a contractor who understands your objectives, communicates clearly, and demonstrates professionalism throughout.

- ☐ Contractor aligns with quality, value, and communication standards

Notes

Shortlisted contractors and thoughts



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Notes

Shortlisted contractors and thoughts

"A designer has a duty to create timeless design. To be timeless you have to think really far into the future, not next year, not in two years but in 20 years minimum." – Phillip Starck

Timelines

Effective planning is the key to a successful renovation

This month-by-month timeline helps you track every stage of your project, from initial approvals and contractor onboarding to deliveries, installation, and completion.

Use it to keep sight of important milestones, monitor progress, and stay proactive about deadlines.

How to Use This Planner

- Each row represents a project milestone.
- Use the boxes to indicate the weeks or months when each phase will take place.
- Update regularly to reflect changes or delays.
- Tick off milestones as they are completed.

Example Timeline Tracker

Task / process	Month 1				Month 2				Month 3			
	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4
Contractor selection & quotations												
Approvals & permits												
material selection												
Site preparation & mobilisation												
Construction & fit-out works												
Inspections & snagging												
Handover & move-in												

Tips for Managing Your Timeline

- Set clear milestones – define completion targets for each stage of work.
- Allow for flexibility – materials, approvals, and unexpected works can affect timing.
- Monitor dependencies – for example, flooring cannot begin before MEP works are complete.
- Schedule regular updates – weekly meetings or reports help keep all parties aligned.
- Track progress visually – update your chart as work progresses to maintain control.

"For every minute spent organizing, an hour is earned." – Benjamin Franklin

TIMELINE

[illegible]

Notes

"Successful people do what unsuccessful people are not willing to do. Don't wish it were easier; wish you were better." - Jim Rohn

Design & Approvals

Design vision

“Architecture should speak of its time and place, but yearn for timelessness.” – Frank Gehry

Moodboard

Visual themes and inspiration

"Form follows function - that has been misunderstood. Form and function should be one, joined in a spiritual union." – Frank Lloyd Wright

Moodboard

Colour palette and elements

"I am going to make everything around me beautiful - that will be my life." – Elsie De Wolfe

Approvals

Understand which approvals you need

Different types of projects require different levels of approval.
Use this as a general guide, but always confirm specific requirements with your developer or project manager.

Project Type	Typical Approvals	Examples
Minor Works	Developer approval	Painting, tiling, flooring replacement
Medium	Developer + Authority approval	Kitchen or bathroom renovation, MEP (mechanical, electrical, plumbing) modifications
Major	Developer + Authority + Specialist consultant approval	Structural changes, full villa fit-out, new extensions

Common approving authorities include:

- Dubai Municipality (DM)
- Dubai Civil Defence (DCD)
- Trakhees (for free zone and coastal developments)
- Nakheel, Emaar, DAMAC, Dubai Properties, etc. (developer NOCs)

Collect the Required Documents

Every approval submission requires supporting documentation.

Ensure your contractor or designer helps you prepare a full set to prevent rejections or delays.

Typical Documents Include:

- Title Deed or Ejari
- Emirates ID / Passport copy of owner
- Drawings (existing and proposed)
- Fit-out drawings and layouts (architectural, MEP, joinery)
- Contractor trade license and insurance certificates
- NOC from building management or developer
- Health, Safety, and Environmental (HSE) compliance forms

Plan for Access and Site Permits

Once approvals are issued, you'll still need access permits for your contractor and workers. These are issued by the building management or developer's security department and typically include

- Worker access cards
- Vehicle entry permits
- Material delivery schedules
- Waste disposal coordination

Your contractor or project manager should manage this process.

Avoid Common Mistakes

- Beginning work before NOC issuance
- Submitting incomplete drawings or documentation
- Using non-approved contractors or materials
- Not coordinating changes during construction

A single missed step can cause significant delays or fines.

A well-prepared approval submission prevents costly delays and ensures your renovation starts on solid ground.

Approvals and NOCs have expiry dates (commonly 3–6 months).
If your project is delayed or extended, request an extension before the deadline to avoid reapplication.

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Notes

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up." - Thomas A. Edison

Notes

“Luxury is when it seems flawless, when you reach the right balance between all elements.
Understated theatricality – that is what my luxury is all about.” – Jean-Louis Deniot

Materials Tracker

Tiles, lighting, paint codes, flooring, fittings, etc.

Material / finish	Supplier contact	lead time	Note

Notes for alternatives if out of stock

Communication Log

Encourages professionalism & accountability

Date	Contact	Summary	Next step	Follow up

Pro Tip - Don't approve drawings you don't understand. Ask for renders

Site Visit Checklist

Your guide to reviewing progress, safety, and quality

Regular site visits are an important part of your renovation journey. They help ensure your project stays on track, maintains quality, and aligns with your expectations.

Use this checklist to guide each visit, whether you're meeting your contractor, your project manager, or simply checking progress yourself.

Before the Visit

Preparation makes your visit more effective.

- ☐ Review your project timeline and milestones before arriving
- ☐ Bring the latest drawings, specifications, or scope of work
- ☐ List any questions or observations from your previous visit
- ☐ Inform your contractor or project manager ahead of time
- ☐ Ensure safety gear is available (helmet, closed shoes, high-vis vest if required)

Site Access and Safety

Your safety and that of everyone on site is the first priority.

- ☐ Safe, clear entry and exit routes
- ☐ No exposed wiring or open trenches without barriers
- ☐ Workers wearing protective gear (helmets, vests, gloves, masks as needed)
- ☐ Fire extinguishers and first aid kits visible and accessible
- ☐ Site kept clean and organised with no unnecessary debris or obstructions
- ☐ Adequate ventilation and lighting inside active work areas

General Site Organisation

A well-managed site reflects professional workmanship.

- ☐ Materials stored properly and labelled
- ☐ Waste disposed of responsibly and regularly
- ☐ Tools and equipment maintained in safe condition
- ☐ No damage to completed or adjacent work areas
- ☐ Supervisor or project manager present and available for questions

Structural and Layout Verification

Check that what's being built aligns with approved designs and drawings.

- ☐ Layout matches drawings (room sizes, wall positions, door/window locations)
- ☐ Ceiling heights consistent with design
- ☐ New walls/plaster work straight, smooth, and aligned
- ☐ Openings and services (AC ducts, plumbing points, sockets) correctly positioned
- ☐ Confirm no unapproved design changes made on site

MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing) Works

MEP systems are often hidden later, so it's crucial to inspect them before finishes are applied.

- ☐ Electrical conduits and socket locations match plan
- ☐ Switch and lighting point heights consistent
- ☐ Plumbing pipes securely fixed, leak-free, and pressure-tested
- ☐ Drain slopes adequate, no ponding visible
- ☐ AC ducts insulated and joints sealed properly
- ☐ Access panels planned for concealed systems

Finishing Works

Surface quality determines the overall impression of your project.

- ☐ Tiling aligned, level, and evenly spaced
- ☐ Grouting neat and colour-consistent
- ☐ Paint smooth and even, no drips or patches
- ☐ Joinery work (cabinets, doors, skirting) fits correctly
- ☐ Countertops, fixtures, and fittings installed level and securely
- ☐ Glass and mirrors clean, scratch-free, and sealed properly
- ☐ Floors protected if other works still ongoing

Materials and Deliveries

Tracking materials early avoids last-minute delays.

- ☐ Verify material deliveries against approved specifications
- ☐ Check for damages on delivery
- ☐ Ensure correct quantities and colours
- ☐ Confirm storage is dry, secure, and appropriate for material type
- ☐ Note any items pending delivery or substitution requests

Quality Control & Workmanship

Consistent quality is achieved through regular inspection.

- ☐ Work areas finished to acceptable standards
- ☐ No visible cracks, uneven edges, or incomplete works
- ☐ Hardware (handles, hinges, locks) functional and aligned
- ☐ Sealants cleanly applied around joints and edges
- ☐ Check consistency between different areas (e.g. paint tone, tile pattern)

Progress vs Timeline

Your site visit is an opportunity to verify project timing.

- ☐ Compare current progress with the project timeline
- ☐ Confirm upcoming milestones and expected completion dates
- ☐ Discuss any delays and agree on revised schedules
- ☐ Ensure updates are logged in weekly reports or your project tracker

Communication and Next Steps

Clarity keeps your project moving efficiently.

- ☐ Discuss observations directly with the contractor or project manager
- ☐ Record any agreed corrective actions and responsible parties
- ☐ Request written confirmation of issues and resolutions
- ☐ Schedule the next site visit date

Take dated photographs for your records during each visit.

Avoid giving direct instructions to site workers - communicate through your contractor or project manager.

Document everything: progress, challenges, and follow-ups.



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Site Visit Log

Date

Works completed

Issues noticed

Actions Agreed

Notes

Write it down now. You'll thank yourself later.

"Do it or not. There is no try." - Yoda

Site Visit Log

Date

Works completed

Issues noticed

Actions Agreed

Notes

Write it down now. You'll thank yourself later.

"Design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown." – Norman Foster

Site Visit Log

Date

Works completed

Issues noticed

Actions Agreed

Notes

Write it down now. You'll thank yourself later.

"Architecture is really about well-being. I think that people want to feel good in a space."
– Zaha Hadid

Site Visit Log

Date

Works completed

Issues noticed

Actions Agreed

Notes

Write it down now. You'll thank yourself later.

"The best rooms have something to say about the people who live in them." – David Hicks

Site Visit Log

Date

Works completed

Issues noticed

Actions Agreed

Notes

Write it down now. You'll thank yourself later.

"You only live one, but if you do it right, once is enough" - Mae West

Snagging & Handover

Inspection checklist

The snagging and handover stage marks the final milestone of your renovation journey.

This is when you carefully inspect all completed works, verify quality, and confirm that every item meets your expectations and the project specifications.

A detailed inspection now prevents unnecessary costs and disruptions later. Use this checklist to review each area of your property, document any defects, and ensure all issues are addressed before accepting handover.

Preparation for Handover

Before the inspection, make sure you have everything you need for an effective review.

- ☐ Review final drawings, specifications, and approved materials
- ☐ Ensure all construction and finishing works are complete
- ☐ Schedule a full walkthrough with the contractor or project manager present
- ☐ Bring a notebook, pen, and camera for documentation
- ☐ Confirm access to all rooms, service areas, and roof spaces if applicable

General Checks (All Areas)

Walk through each space carefully, observing overall quality and consistency.

- ☐ Walls and ceilings finished smoothly and evenly
- ☐ Paintwork clean and uniform, with no visible brush marks or stains
- ☐ Floors level, clean, and free of cracks, chips, or gaps
- ☐ Doors and windows aligned, open and close smoothly, and lock securely
- ☐ Skirting, trims, and edges neatly finished and sealed
- ☐ Lighting and electrical fittings securely installed and functional
- ☐ Air conditioning operational with proper airflow and no unusual noise
- ☐ No signs of water leaks, stains, or damp patches

Electrical Systems

Safety and function are top priority.

- ☐ All switches, sockets, and dimmers working correctly
- ☐ Light fixtures installed securely and aligned
- ☐ Circuit breakers labelled and operational
- ☐ Data and power outlets positioned as per plan
- ☐ Smart home systems tested (if applicable)
- ☐ All electrical panels closed and labelled

Plumbing and Sanitary Fixtures

Check for leaks, water pressure, and finishing quality.

- ☐ All taps and mixers operate smoothly with consistent pressure
- ☐ No leaks at joints or under sinks
- ☐ Drains flowing properly with no blockages or backflow
- ☐ Toilets fixed securely and flushing correctly
- ☐ Water heaters and pumps functioning as expected
- ☐ Hot and cold water lines correctly connected
- ☐ No exposed or unfinished pipework

Air Conditioning and Ventilation

A well-balanced cooling system is essential for comfort and efficiency.

- ☐ All AC units operational, cooling evenly
- ☐ No rattling, leaks, or vibration from ductwork
- ☐ Air vents installed straight, clean, and dust-free
- ☐ Thermostats calibrated and functioning
- ☐ Condensate drain lines clear and properly routed

Joinery and Fixtures

Attention to detail defines a premium finish.

- ☐ Cabinet doors and drawers open and close smoothly
- ☐ Hinges, handles, and knobs secure and aligned
- ☐ Wardrobes and shelving installed straight and level
- ☐ Countertops fixed securely and sealed against moisture
- ☐ Mirrors, glass, and decorative panels clean and free of scratches

Paint and Finishes

Final finishes should meet both design and quality expectations.

- ☐ No uneven patches, roller marks, or discolouration
- ☐ Consistent colour tone throughout each space
- ☐ No paint splashes on tiles, fittings, or switches
- ☐ Decorative finishes or wallpaper installed correctly with clean edges

Floors and Surfaces

A smooth, level surface is critical to the look and longevity of your project.

- ☐ Tiles aligned and evenly spaced, with consistent grouting
- ☐ Timber or vinyl floors securely fixed and level
- ☐ No hollow sounds when tapping tiles (a sign of weak bonding)
- ☐ Joints sealed at thresholds and around skirtings
- ☐ Surfaces clean, free of adhesive residue and scratches

External Areas

For villas or properties with outdoor works, include these checks.

- ☐ Landscaping completed as per scope
- ☐ External lighting working and weatherproofed
- ☐ Gates, fences, or pergolas stable and finished properly
- ☐ Outdoor AC units elevated and accessible for maintenance
- ☐ Drainage flowing away from structures

Final Documentation and Sign-Off

Before final acceptance, confirm all paperwork and warranties are in place.

- ☐ All snagging items documented with photos and descriptions
- ☐ Snag list signed by both client and contractor
- ☐ Agreed timeline for rectifications confirmed in writing
- ☐ All warranties and manuals received (equipment, appliances, finishes)
- ☐ Final invoice reviewed against agreed payment schedule
- ☐ Completion certificate or NOC obtained from relevant authority
- ☐ Site cleaned and cleared of construction debris

Snagging

[illegible]

Stress Management

1. Breathe. 2. Don't panic. 3. Call your project manager.



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Notes

"If you are not willing to risk the usual, you will have to settle for the ordinary." - Jim Rohn

Handover

Review Your Handover Documents

Before you settle in, make sure all documentation is complete and stored safely.

- ☐ Warranties for equipment, fittings, and appliances received
- ☐ Relevant authority and compliance signoff received
- ☐ Maintenance instructions from manufacturers collected
- ☐ "As-built" drawings and specifications stored digitally and physically
- ☐ Contractor and project manager contact information saved
- ☐ Service and warranty periods noted in calendar

Tip: Keep a digital copy of all documents. You may need them later for resale, upgrades, or future maintenance.

Thoughts

"Keep your fears to yourself, but share your courage with others." - Robert Louis Stevenson

Maintenance

Congratulations!

Your project is complete, and your new space is ready to enjoy.

But once the dust has settled and the tools are gone, the care of your new home or office is just beginning.

Proper maintenance preserves your finishes, protects warranties, and ensures your investment continues to deliver value and comfort long after handover.

Monitor for Early Warning Signs

Addressing small issues early avoids large-scale repairs later.

During your routine checks, watch for:

- Cracks or discolouration in walls or ceilings
- Unusual noise or vibration from AC units
- Changes in water pressure or slow drains
- Fading or bubbling in paint or wallpaper
- Doors or windows becoming difficult to close
- Visible moisture or dampness near skirting or corners

Report persistent issues to your contractor or a qualified maintenance company immediately.

Protect Your Finishes

Different materials require different care.

Use gentle cleaning products, avoid harsh abrasives, and follow manufacturer recommendations.

Examples:

- Stone countertops: Use pH-neutral cleaners and re-seal annually.
- Wood floors: Keep dry, clean with appropriate products, and avoid excessive water.
- Metal fixtures: Wipe regularly to prevent corrosion; avoid ammonia-based cleaners.
- Glass and mirrors: Clean with soft cloths to prevent scratching.

Always test cleaning products on a small, hidden area first.

Maintenance

Plan for Seasonal Maintenance

Dubai's weather can take a toll on buildings: high temperatures, humidity, and sand affect both interiors and exteriors.

Pre-Summer Checklist:

- ☐ AC serviced and filters cleaned
- ☐ Sealants checked on windows and balconies
- ☐ Outdoor lighting inspected
- ☐ Drains and gutters cleared
- ☐ Paint and waterproofing reviewed for cracking or peeling

Post-Summer Checklist:

- ☐ Recheck electrical systems and appliances
- ☐ Clean air vents and outdoor units
- ☐ Inspect for heat-related expansion or cracking

Maintain Warranties and Service Records

Keep all maintenance activities documented.

Many warranties require proof of regular servicing, especially for AC units, equipment, and appliances.

- ☐ Record service provider names and contact details
- ☐ Keep receipts and service reports in one file
- ☐ Track warranty expiry dates and renewal reminders

"Another flaw in the human character is that everybody wants to build and nobody wants to do maintenance." - Kurt Vonnegut

Maintenance Schedule

[illegible]

Maintenance Contacts

	Company	Contact	Notes
A/C Servicing			
Plumbing			
Landscaping			
Electrical			
Cleaning			
Pest control			
Handyman			
Painting			
Building Management			

Maintenance Log

[illegible]

Annual Review Summary

Category	Condition	Notes & Planned Action
Structure		
Flooring		
Finishes		
Electrical		
Plumbing		
HVAC		
Joinery		
Furniture		
Paintwork		
Fixtures		
Appliances		
Outdoor Areas		

Become a Community Champion

Because the best recommendations don't come from ads. They come from you.

When it comes to renovations, trust is everything. That's why we have initiated a community champions program, which benefits you and your neighbourhood.

A straight-forward system that is designed to benefit both yourself and the person you referred to us.

It's simple. If you refer someone to Contractors Direct, and their qualifying project is awarded through our platform, you receive AED 2,000 as a thank you. Just make sure your friend mentions your name as a Community Champion when enquiring. We can also donate this to one of our partner charities on your behalf, if you prefer.

Even better, your friend, neighbour, or colleague will also receive AED 1,000 cashback on their project.

Everyone wins.

Whether you've just finished a villa makeover, helped someone launch a new space, or simply want to recommend us, your voice matters. And when you share your story, people listen.

So if you've had a great experience with us, or just heard of us, don't keep it to yourself.

Share us in your WhatsApp & Facebook groups, neighbourhood chats, or over coffee.

We'll handle the hard part. You just keep being the expert your community trusts.

Email: community@contractors.direct to register or for details.

"I cannot give you a formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure, which is:
Try to please everybody." - Herbert Bayard Swope

Thank You

Congratulations on reaching the end of your renovation journey.

At Contractors Direct, we know that every great project is about creating a space that reflects your vision, supports your lifestyle, and grows with you.

We hope this Project Survival Guide has helped you stay organised, informed, and confident throughout your renovation.

Inside, you've planned, tracked, and recorded the milestones that brought your project to life, and we hope that your relationship with us doesn't end here.

We're in for the long run.

Whether it's advice on future upgrades, maintenance support, or connecting you with trusted professionals for your next project, the team are here for you.

Stay Connected

For expert tips, verified contractors, and ongoing project support:

Visit: contractors.direct

Email: info@contractors.direct

Follow us on social media for project inspiration, design insight, and community stories from homeowners just like you.

[Instagram](#) / [LinkedIn](#) / [Facebook](#)

Thank You

From all of us at Contractors Direct, thank you for trusting us with your project. We take great pride in being part of your story, and we look forward to being part of the next one.

Contractors Direct
Serious About Your Project



"You've got a friend in me" - Toy Story

Notes & Reflections

Things I learned...

"Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works." – Steve Jobs

Notes & Reflections

Things I would do differently next time

"I always put in one controversial item. It makes people talk." – Dorothy Draper

