

CALGARY CONSTRUCTION NETWORK

Bathroom Renovations

Questions about bathroom remodeling, fixtures,
layouts, and upgrades

12 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

calgaryconstructionnetwork.com/construction-brain

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Can you put heated floors under tile in a main floor bathroom or is the concrete slab too thick?

Yes, you can absolutely install heated floors under tile in a main floor bathroom, even over a concrete slab.

In fact, concrete slabs are excellent for radiant floor heating because they store and distribute heat evenly throughout the room.

There are two main types of radiant floor heating that work well over concrete slabs in Calgary bathrooms. **Electric radiant systems** use thin heating cables or mats that are embedded directly in the tile adhesive or a thin layer of self-leveling compound. These systems add only 1/8" to 1/4" to your floor height and are perfect for retrofit applications. The heating elements go right over your existing concrete, then you install tile on top using modified thinset adhesive.

Hydronic (water-based) systems circulate warm water through PEX tubing and are more complex but highly efficient for larger areas. For a bathroom retrofit over concrete, this typically requires installing sleeper strips or a lightweight concrete overlay to house the tubing, adding 1-2 inches to floor height. While more involved, hydronic systems have lower operating costs and integrate well with high-efficiency boilers common in Calgary homes.

Calgary's extreme winters make heated bathroom floors particularly appealing — stepping onto warm tile when it's -30°C outside is a luxury worth the investment. The concrete slab actually works in your favor here, acting as thermal mass that stores heat and provides consistent, comfortable temperatures. Calgary's clay soils and deep frost line mean most main floor bathrooms sit on well-insulated concrete slabs that are ideal for radiant heating.

Installation considerations include ensuring your electrical panel can handle the additional load (typically 10-15 watts per square foot for electric systems) and installing a programmable thermostat with floor sensor. For electric systems, you'll need a dedicated 15-20 amp circuit. The concrete slab may need minor preparation — filling any cracks and ensuring it's level — but the thickness is actually beneficial, not a hindrance.

Professional installation is recommended for the electrical connections and waterproofing integration. In Calgary, expect to pay \$15-25 per square foot for electric radiant systems including professional installation, or \$20-35 per square foot for hydronic systems. A typical 50 square foot bathroom runs \$750-\$1,250 for electric or \$1,000-\$1,750 for hydronic systems.

The concrete slab thickness is definitely not a problem — it's actually one of the best substrates for radiant floor heating in Calgary's climate.

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Q2

Is my home insurance going to drop me if I don't replace knob and tube wiring in Bankview within a year?

Many Alberta home insurance companies will indeed cancel or refuse to renew policies with active knob and tube wiring, often giving homeowners 30-90 days notice to replace it or face non-renewal. This isn't just a Bankview issue — it's province-wide as insurers increasingly view knob and tube as an unacceptable fire risk.

Insurance companies have become much stricter about knob and tube wiring over the past decade. Most major insurers in Alberta (including Intact, Aviva, Co-operators, and others) now have policies requiring knob and tube replacement within 30-90 days of discovery, though some may give up to a year for complete rewiring. The exact timeline depends on your specific insurer and policy terms. Some companies won't insure homes with any knob and tube at all, while others may offer coverage at significantly higher premiums with strict replacement deadlines.

Contact your insurance broker or company immediately to understand your specific situation. Get the deadline in writing and ask about any temporary coverage extensions if you're actively working toward replacement. Some insurers will extend deadlines if you can show you've hired a licensed electrician and obtained permits, but this varies by company.

Knob and tube replacement in a typical Bankview home (many are 1940s-1960s bungalows) typically costs \$8,000-\$18,000 depending on home size, accessibility, and whether you're doing a full rewire or just replacing the knob and tube circuits. The work requires a licensed electrician, electrical permits through the City of Calgary, and multiple inspections. Most Bankview homes also need electrical panel upgrades from 60A or 100A to 200A service, adding \$2,000-\$4,000 to the project.

This is absolutely not DIY work — electrical work in Alberta must be performed by licensed electricians and inspected by accredited Safety Codes Officers. Attempting DIY electrical work will void your insurance entirely and

create serious liability issues. The good news is that modern wiring will likely reduce your insurance premiums and definitely increases your home's value and safety.

Next steps: Call your insurance company today to confirm your deadline, then get quotes from at least three licensed electricians. Most can provide rough estimates over the phone based on your home's age, size, and basement accessibility. Find verified electrical contractors in our Calgary directory to start the process — don't wait until the last minute as electricians book up quickly for full rewiring projects.

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Q3

Can you put heated floors under tile in a main floor bathroom, or is the concrete slab too thick?

Yes, you can absolutely install heated floors under tile in a main floor bathroom, even with a concrete slab. In fact, concrete slabs are excellent for radiant floor heating because they store and distribute heat very effectively.

Electric vs. Hydronic Systems for Concrete Slabs

For existing concrete slabs in Calgary bathrooms, **electric radiant heating mats** are typically the best choice. These thin heating cables (about 1/8" thick) are embedded in the tile adhesive or a thin layer of self-leveling compound directly over your existing slab. The concrete thickness actually works in your favor here — it acts as a thermal mass that stores heat and provides even, consistent warmth.

Hydronic (hot water) systems are more complex for retrofit applications since they require thicker installation and integration with your home's heating system. These are usually installed during new construction when the concrete is poured, or in major renovations where you're already breaking up the slab.

Calgary Installation Considerations

Given Calgary's extreme winter temperatures and concrete slab construction, heated bathroom floors are particularly popular and effective. The concrete slab provides excellent thermal mass, meaning once heated, it stays warm longer and provides consistent comfort even during those -30°C chinook swings we experience.

Your existing concrete slab doesn't need to be modified — the electric heating system goes on top. The typical installation involves: existing slab ? heating mat ? tile adhesive ? tile. This adds only about 1/4" to 3/8" to your floor height, which is usually manageable in most bathrooms.

Electrical and Permit Requirements

Under Alberta's electrical code administered by the City of Calgary, heated floor installation requires an electrical permit and must be completed by a licensed electrician. The system needs GFCI protection and a dedicated circuit. Most electric radiant systems draw 10-15 watts per square foot, so a typical 50 sq ft bathroom needs about 750 watts — easily handled by a 15-amp dedicated circuit.

Costs and Professional Installation

Expect to pay **\$12-\$18 per square foot** for electric radiant heating materials in the Calgary market, plus installation costs. A typical main floor bathroom (40-60 sq ft of heated area) runs **\$1,200-\$2,500** for materials and professional installation, including electrical work and permits.

Next Steps

Have a licensed electrician assess your electrical panel capacity and plan the dedicated circuit. Then work with a tile installer experienced with radiant heating — the heating mats must be installed correctly to avoid damage during tile installation. Many Calgary tile contractors are very familiar with these systems given our climate.

Find verified electricians and tile installers experienced with radiant heating systems in our Calgary Construction Network directory.

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What kind of drywall should I use in a basement bathroom shower area to prevent mold in Calgary's humidity?

For a basement bathroom shower area in Calgary, you absolutely need moisture-resistant drywall like purple board (mold-resistant) or cement board, never standard drywall. Regular drywall will fail quickly in the high-humidity environment of a shower, leading to mold growth and structural damage.

Purple board (mold-resistant drywall) is your most practical option for most basement bathroom applications. Brands like CertainTeed M2Tech or USG Sheetrock Brand Mold Tough are specifically engineered with mold-resistant facing and core materials. This drywall has a purple-colored paper facing that resists moisture absorption and mold growth much better than standard white drywall. It's suitable for areas that will receive ceramic tile or other wall finishes, though it's not recommended for direct exposure to water like inside a shower enclosure.

For the actual shower enclosure walls where tile will be installed, **cement board (like Hardiebacker or Durock) is the gold standard.** Cement board is completely waterproof and provides an ideal substrate for tile installation. It won't deteriorate if moisture gets behind the tile, which can happen over time with even the best waterproofing. Many Calgary contractors prefer cement board in shower areas because it's virtually indestructible and handles our extreme temperature swings without expanding or contracting like drywall can.

Calgary's basement humidity challenges make proper material selection critical. Our city's expansive clay soils mean basements often deal with higher humidity levels, especially during spring melt and summer storms. The combination of a below-grade location and Calgary's temperature swings creates perfect conditions for condensation and moisture problems. Additionally, many Calgary homes have basement bathrooms that don't get as much natural ventilation as main-floor bathrooms.

Professional installation requirements are important to understand. In Alberta, bathroom renovations require building permits when you're adding new plumbing or electrical, and all work must be inspected by certified Safety Codes Officers employed by the City of Calgary system. The waterproofing membrane behind your tile is just as important as the substrate - this typically involves a liquid membrane or sheet membrane system that creates a complete moisture barrier.

Your next steps should include getting a building permit if you're adding a new bathroom or substantially renovating an existing one, ensuring proper ventilation with an appropriately sized exhaust fan, and hiring a licensed contractor experienced with basement bathroom installations. The waterproofing and tile work requires specific expertise to prevent costly moisture damage down the road. Expect to budget \$25,000-\$45,000 for a complete basement bathroom renovation in Calgary, including proper moisture management systems.

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Q5

How long does it take to replace a bathtub with a walk-in shower? The contractor said 5 days, but that seems fast?

A 5-day timeline for a tub-to-shower conversion is actually quite reasonable for an experienced contractor, assuming it's a straightforward replacement in the same footprint without major plumbing or structural changes.

The timeline depends heavily on the scope of work and whether you're keeping the shower in the exact same location. If your contractor is simply removing the existing tub, installing a new shower base or tile floor, and updating the plumbing fixtures and surround, five days is realistic for a professional crew. However, this assumes they have all materials on-site, no surprises behind the walls, and favorable working conditions.

Day 1 typically involves demolition — removing the old tub, tiles, and any damaged drywall. **Day 2** covers rough plumbing adjustments (moving the shower valve, installing new drain lines if needed) and any necessary framing modifications. **Days 3-4** focus on waterproofing, installing the shower base or tile work, and beginning wall finishes. **Day 5** handles final plumbing connections, finishing touches, and cleanup.

Calgary-specific considerations can affect this timeline. In Greater Calgary, plumbing permits are required for any rough plumbing changes through the City of Calgary — not just simple fixture swaps. If your contractor needs to move plumbing lines significantly or install new drain connections, add 1-2 days for permit approval and mandatory inspections by accredited Safety Codes Officers. Winter conditions can also slow material deliveries, especially if specialty tile or fixtures are backordered.

What could extend the timeline includes discovering rotted subfloor or framing (common in older Calgary homes), needing electrical work for new lighting or ventilation, or if you're upgrading from a standard tub to a large walk-in shower that requires floor modifications. Homes built before 1980 often have surprises behind the walls — outdated plumbing, inadequate framing, or asbestos-containing materials that require professional abatement.

Professional guidance suggests asking your contractor to walk through their day-by-day plan and confirm what's included. Verify they've pulled necessary permits and scheduled required inspections. A reputable contractor will have contingency time built in and communicate clearly if delays occur. If this seems rushed for your specific situation, don't hesitate to ask questions — better to understand the plan upfront than face surprises mid-project.

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Q6

We're converting our old soaker tub into a double vanity setup. It took 3 days and the extra counter space is a game changer?

Converting a soaker tub to a double vanity is an excellent way to maximize bathroom functionality and add significant value to your Calgary home. Three days sounds like a well-planned project, and that extra counter space makes a huge difference in daily routines, especially in busy households.

This type of conversion typically involves several critical steps that require proper permits and professional expertise. **Plumbing modifications** are the most complex aspect — the existing tub drain and supply lines need to be reconfigured for dual sinks, which requires a licensed plumber under Alberta's Safety Codes system. The electrical work for additional lighting, GFCI outlets, and potentially ventilation upgrades must be done by a licensed electrician and inspected by accredited Safety Codes Officers.

Structural considerations are important too, especially if you're installing a heavy stone or quartz countertop. The floor framing that previously supported a filled soaker tub (which can weigh 1,000+ pounds) is typically more than

adequate for a vanity, but the wall framing may need reinforcement for wall-mounted vanities or large mirrors. Proper waterproofing behind the vanity area is crucial — Calgary's dry climate can cause wood movement, and any plumbing leaks can cause expensive damage.

For Calgary homeowners, this renovation typically requires a building permit from the City of Calgary (call 311 or visit calgary.ca/development) since it involves plumbing and electrical changes. The permit process usually takes 2-4 weeks for straightforward bathroom renovations. You'll need separate permits for plumbing and electrical work, and inspections are required at rough-in and final stages.

Cost considerations for this type of conversion in the Calgary market typically range from \$8,000-\$25,000 depending on vanity quality, countertop material, plumbing complexity, and electrical upgrades. Higher-end materials like quartz countertops, custom cabinetry, and premium fixtures push costs toward the upper range, while standard materials and simpler configurations keep costs lower.

The **next steps** for homeowners considering this conversion should include getting quotes from licensed plumbers and electricians, selecting your vanity and countertop materials early (lead times can be 4-8 weeks), and applying for permits before work begins. Make sure any contractors you hire are properly licensed and carry WCB Alberta coverage — verify this at wcb.ab.ca.

Find verified plumbing and electrical contractors for your bathroom renovation in our Calgary directory to ensure your project meets all Alberta Building Code requirements and Safety Codes standards.

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My contractor wants to use sono tubes for my deck in Tuscany, but I heard about clay soil movement. Should I insist on helical piles?

Your contractor's recommendation for sono tubes (concrete footings) can work in Tuscany, but helical piles are worth considering given Calgary's challenging soil conditions. The decision depends on your deck size, height, and specific soil conditions on your lot.

Tuscany and Calgary's Clay Soil Challenge

Tuscany, like much of northwest Calgary, sits on expansive clay soils that are notorious for seasonal movement. These bentonite clays swell significantly when wet and shrink when dry, creating a cycle of heaving and settling that can shift deck footings over time. The problem is compounded by Calgary's extreme freeze-thaw cycles and chinook temperature swings that can cause dramatic moisture changes in the soil.

Sono tube footings work by extending below the frost line (4+ feet deep in Calgary) and bearing on stable soil. When properly installed with adequate depth and diameter, they can handle moderate soil movement. However, if your deck is large, attached to the house, or if you've noticed other foundation movement issues on your property, helical piles offer superior stability.

When Helical Piles Make Sense

Helical piles are steel shafts with helical plates that are screwed deep into the ground until they reach stable bearing capacity, often 15-25 feet down in Calgary. They're engineered to specific load requirements and provide consistent support regardless of surface soil movement. Consider helical piles if your deck is over 24 inches high, spans more than 12 feet, or if you've experienced foundation settling elsewhere on your property. They're also worth the investment for premium deck builds with heavy materials like stone or tile.

The Cost Reality

Sono tube footings typically cost \$150-300 per footing installed, while helical piles run \$400-800 per pile depending on depth and load requirements. For a typical 12x16 deck requiring 6-8 footings, you're looking at \$1,200-2,400 for sono tubes versus \$2,400-6,400 for helical piles. The price difference is significant, but helical piles virtually eliminate future settling issues.

Professional Recommendation

Have your contractor assess your specific site conditions and deck design. If the deck is low-profile, freestanding, and the soil appears stable, properly installed sono tubes meeting Alberta Building Code requirements should perform well. However, if you're investing in a substantial deck or have any concerns about soil stability, helical

piles provide long-term peace of mind. Either option requires a building permit from the City of Calgary and proper engineering if the deck is attached to your house.

Find experienced deck contractors familiar with Calgary soil conditions in our verified contractor directory who can assess your specific situation and provide detailed recommendations.

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Q8

Our ensuite has zero ventilation, and the mirror fogs up every time. Can we add a fan without tearing up the ceiling?

Yes, you can likely add an exhaust fan without major ceiling demolition, though the exact approach depends on your home's layout and what's above the bathroom. Most Calgary homes have accessible routes through attic spaces, and there are several installation methods that minimize drywall damage.

The most common solution is installing a **ceiling-mounted exhaust fan** that vents through the roof or exterior wall. If you have attic access above the ensuite, an experienced contractor can often fish wiring and install ductwork with only a single ceiling hole for the fan housing. They'll cut the fan opening, run electrical from an existing circuit or the panel, and route 4-inch rigid or flexible ductwork to the nearest exterior wall or roof penetration.

For homes without attic access, **wall-mounted fans** are an excellent alternative. These units mount directly on an exterior wall and require only a 4-6 inch hole through the wall - no ceiling work needed. While slightly less effective than ceiling fans, modern wall units move plenty of air for typical ensuite bathrooms. Some homeowners also consider **inline fans** mounted in the attic or basement with ceiling grilles, which are quieter but require more complex ductwork.

Calgary's extreme temperature swings make proper installation critical. Your exhaust duct must be insulated to prevent condensation in winter, and the exterior termination needs a proper damper and pest guard. Never terminate bathroom exhaust into the attic - moisture will cause mold and rot issues, especially during our -30°C winters followed by chinook warm-ups.

Electrical and ventilation work requires permits and inspections through the City of Calgary. A licensed electrician must handle the wiring (new circuit or connection to existing), and the installation needs inspection. Most contractors can complete this work in 4-6 hours with minimal mess.

Professional installation is strongly recommended - improper ductwork routing, inadequate sealing, or electrical mistakes can create safety hazards and code violations. The investment in proper installation (typically \$400-\$800 including permits) will solve your fogging problem and protect your home from moisture damage.

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Q9

Can I tile over existing tile in a bathroom, or do I always need to rip it out first?

You can tile over existing tile in many situations, but success depends on the condition of the current tile and proper surface preparation. This approach can save significant time and money compared to full removal, but it's not always the best choice.

When Tiling Over Existing Tile Works Well

If your current tile is firmly adhered to the wall with no loose pieces, hollow spots, or significant damage, tiling over it can be a viable option. The existing tile needs to be clean, level, and structurally sound. Small hairline cracks are

usually acceptable, but any tiles that sound hollow when tapped or have significant chips should be addressed first. The grout lines should be in decent condition without major gaps or crumbling areas.

The key to success is proper surface preparation. You'll need to thoroughly clean the existing tile with a degreasing cleaner to remove soap scum, oils, and any residue. Light sanding or using a chemical etching primer helps create better adhesion. Many contractors in Calgary use bonding primers specifically designed for tile-over-tile applications, which significantly improve adhesion between the old surface and new tile.

Calgary Building Code and Practical Considerations

For bathroom renovations in Calgary, you'll need a building permit if you're doing extensive work, but simply retiling over existing tile typically doesn't require permits unless you're moving plumbing or electrical. However, the **Alberta Building Code requires proper moisture barriers in wet areas**. If your existing tile installation lacks adequate waterproofing behind it, tiling over won't solve potential moisture problems - it might actually trap moisture and create bigger issues down the road.

Calgary's extreme temperature swings and dry climate can cause tile adhesive to fail over time. If your home experiences significant settling or movement (common with Calgary's expansive clay soils), the additional thickness and weight of double-layer tile might create stress points that lead to cracking.

When You Should Remove the Old Tile

Remove existing tile if it's loose, damaged, or if the underlying surface has moisture damage or structural issues. If you're planning a complete bathroom renovation that involves moving plumbing or electrical, it's usually worth removing everything to ensure proper waterproofing and to bring everything up to current code standards. The City of Calgary requires proper permits and inspections for any plumbing or electrical work, and having clear access to walls makes this process much easier.

Also consider the thickness factor - adding another layer of tile raises the floor or wall surface, which can create awkward transitions at doorways, around fixtures, or where tile meets other materials. In small Calgary bathrooms, every inch of space matters.

Professional vs. DIY Approach

While homeowners can handle simple tile-over-tile projects, having a professional assess the existing installation is wise. A qualified tile installer can identify potential problems like inadequate substrate, moisture issues, or structural concerns that aren't obvious to untrained eyes. They can also ensure proper waterproofing, especially critical in Calgary's climate where freeze-thaw cycles can exploit any moisture infiltration.

Next Steps

Start by thoroughly inspecting your existing tile - tap each tile to listen for hollow sounds and check for any loose or damaged pieces. If the tile seems solid, clean a small test area and try adhering a sample tile to see how well it bonds. For peace of mind and to ensure the job is done right, consider getting quotes from verified tile installers in our Calgary directory who can assess your specific situation and recommend the best approach for your bathroom renovation.

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Does a bathroom renovation in a condo need board approval in Calgary, or just city permits?

Both condo board approval AND city permits are required for bathroom renovations in Calgary condos.

You cannot proceed with just one or the other — both approvals are mandatory before any work begins.

Condo board approval comes first and is non-negotiable. Under Alberta's Condominium Property Act, any renovation that could affect common property, building systems, or other units requires written board approval. Even a "simple" bathroom reno typically involves plumbing, electrical, and potentially structural elements that connect to building systems. Your condo corporation's bylaws will outline the approval process, required documentation, and any restrictions on materials or work hours.

Most condo boards require you to submit renovation plans, contractor insurance certificates (typically \$2M+ liability coverage), and pay a refundable damage deposit (\$500-\$2,000 is common). The board will review whether your proposed changes comply with building codes, condo bylaws, and won't negatively impact other units or common property. This process typically takes 2-4 weeks, so start early.

City permits are required regardless of condo board approval. The City of Calgary requires building permits for bathroom renovations that involve moving plumbing fixtures, electrical work beyond simple replacements, or structural changes. Even if you're just updating finishes, electrical and plumbing permits are often needed. Your contractor will handle permit applications through calgary.ca or calgaryplanningpermit.ca, with typical processing times of 2-4 weeks for straightforward bathroom renos.

Critical timing consideration: Get condo board approval before applying for city permits. Some boards require seeing approved city permits before giving final approval, while others want to review plans first. Check your specific condo corporation's process to avoid delays.

What counts as common property in your bathroom might surprise you — plumbing stacks, electrical risers, exterior walls, and sometimes even windows are typically common property even if they're inside your unit boundary. Your condo plan will show exact unit boundaries, but when in doubt, assume board approval is needed.

Noise restrictions are strictly enforced in Calgary condos — most limit construction to Monday-Friday 8am-5pm, with some allowing Saturday mornings. Violating noise bylaws can result in fines and work stoppages.

Find verified contractors experienced with Calgary condo renovations in our directory at Calgary Construction Network — they'll understand both the city permit process and condo corporation requirements.

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Q11

What is the before and after ROI on adding a main floor laundry and accessible bathroom to a bungalow?

Adding a main floor laundry and accessible bathroom to a Calgary bungalow typically provides a 60-80% return on investment, with the accessible bathroom being the stronger value-add due to aging demographics and universal design demand.

The **main floor laundry conversion** generally costs \$8,000-\$15,000 depending on plumbing complexity and finishes. This involves relocating washer/dryer hookups from the basement, adding proper ventilation, waterproof flooring, and often requires moving plumbing stacks. In Calgary's established neighborhoods with 1960s-1980s bungalows, this upgrade can add \$12,000-\$18,000 in home value. Buyers consistently rank main floor laundry as a top priority, especially in communities like Acadia, Lake Bonavista, and Woodbine where many homes still have basement-only laundry facilities.

The **accessible bathroom addition** provides stronger ROI, typically costing \$25,000-\$45,000 but adding \$35,000-\$55,000 in value. This involves creating a barrier-free shower, wider doorways (36" minimum), grab bars, comfort-height toilet, and accessible vanity. The project often requires removing walls, relocating plumbing, and upgrading electrical. Calgary's aging population and universal design awareness make this upgrade increasingly valuable.

Calgary-specific factors that enhance ROI include the city's aging housing stock and demographics. Many established communities have residents aging in place, creating strong demand for accessible features. The recent blanket rezoning to R-CG also means your property could attract multi-generational families or future subdivision potential, where accessibility features command premium pricing.

Permitting requirements include building permits for both projects, plus plumbing and electrical permits. The accessible bathroom may trigger accessibility compliance under the Alberta Building Code if you're doing

substantial renovations. Expect 4-6 weeks for permit approval and mandatory inspections at rough-in and final stages.

Professional guidance is essential - this isn't DIY territory. Licensed plumbers must handle all water supply and drainage modifications, electricians handle ventilation fans and GFCI outlets, and general contractors coordinate the complex sequencing. Poor execution can create moisture problems, especially in Calgary's extreme temperature swings.

Next steps: Get quotes from bathroom renovation specialists and plumbers familiar with accessibility modifications. Budget for potential surprises like outdated plumbing that needs upgrading to current code. The investment pays off both in daily livability and strong resale value in Calgary's competitive market.

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Q12

Is it worth adding floor heating to a basement bathroom in Cranston, or should I just stick with forced air?

Adding floor heating to your basement bathroom in Cranston is absolutely worth considering, especially given Calgary's harsh winters and the fact that basement bathrooms can feel particularly cold on tile floors.

Floor heating provides superior comfort and can actually be more energy-efficient than relying solely on forced air for that space.

Radiant floor heating works exceptionally well in basement bathrooms because it heats from the ground up, eliminating cold spots that forced air systems often leave behind. In Calgary's climate, where basement concrete

slabs stay cold year-round, the temperature difference is immediately noticeable. Electric radiant mats are the most common choice for bathroom retrofits — they install directly under tile, luxury vinyl, or engineered hardwood and typically add only 1/4 to 3/8 inch to your floor height.

The **cost in the Greater Calgary market** ranges from \$8-15 per square foot for electric radiant systems, plus installation. For a typical 50 square foot basement bathroom, you're looking at \$1,200-2,500 total installed. Hydronic (hot water) systems cost more upfront but are more efficient for larger areas — though they're rarely cost-effective for single bathrooms unless you're doing multiple rooms.

Energy efficiency is where floor heating really shines in basement applications. Because radiant heat warms objects and people directly rather than heating air, you can maintain comfort at lower thermostat settings. Many homeowners find they can reduce their main floor furnace load when basement spaces have dedicated radiant heating. The system only runs when needed and can be controlled with programmable thermostats or even smart controls.

Installation considerations for your Cranston home include ensuring your electrical panel can handle the additional load (most bathroom systems need a dedicated 15-20 amp circuit), and coordinating with any other bathroom renovations. If you're already planning to replace flooring, it's the perfect time to add radiant heating since the floor needs to come up anyway. The system must be installed by a licensed electrician and requires electrical permits and inspection by City of Calgary Safety Codes Officers.

Forced air limitations in basement bathrooms are significant — cold concrete floors, poor air circulation in smaller spaces, and the fact that warm air rises means your feet stay cold even when the room temperature is adequate. Many basement bathrooms also have inadequate return air circulation, making temperature control inconsistent.

For your Cranston location specifically, the newer community likely has good electrical infrastructure to handle the additional load, and if your home was built in the last 15 years, adding a dedicated circuit should be straightforward. The investment typically pays back through increased comfort and home value, plus the energy savings over time.

Professional guidance is essential — have a licensed electrician assess your electrical capacity and provide proper installation. The flooring contractor and electrician need to coordinate timing carefully since the heating elements must be installed before final flooring but after subfloor preparation.

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