

CALGARY CONSTRUCTION NETWORK

Hiring Contractors

Questions about finding, vetting, and working with contractors in Greater Calgary, including WCB Alberta and trade certification verification

21 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

calgaryconstructionnetwork.com/construction-brain

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How do i find a contractor experienced with post flood rebuilds in sunnyside and hillhurst?

Finding contractors experienced with flood rebuilds in Sunnyside and Hillhurst requires targeting professionals who worked extensively during Calgary's 2013 flood recovery and understand these neighborhoods' unique challenges.

Post-flood rebuilds in these communities involve specific expertise that goes beyond typical renovations. Sunnyside and Hillhurst were among the hardest-hit areas during the 2013 flood, with many homes requiring complete gut jobs down to the studs. The contractors who rebuilt these communities developed specialized knowledge of flood-resistant construction methods, dealing with contaminated materials, and working within the tight timelines insurance companies demanded.

Local expertise matters significantly in these neighborhoods. Sunnyside's heritage character homes and Hillhurst's mix of older bungalows and newer infills each present unique challenges. Experienced contractors understand the soil conditions along the Bow River, the specific drainage issues these communities face, and how to retrofit older homes with modern flood mitigation measures. They also know which materials and construction methods work best in flood-prone areas — things like using closed-cell spray foam insulation instead of batt insulation, installing flood-resistant flooring systems, and properly waterproofing basements.

When vetting contractors for flood rebuild experience, ask specific questions about their 2013 flood work. How many homes did they rebuild in Sunnyside or Hillhurst? Can they provide references from those projects? Do they understand flood-resistant construction techniques like elevated utilities, proper vapor barriers, and mold prevention strategies? Ask about their experience with insurance claims and working within insurance timelines and budgets.

Insurance considerations are crucial for flood rebuilds. Contractors experienced with flood work understand how to document everything for insurance purposes, work within adjuster-approved scopes, and handle the paperwork that comes with major insurance claims. They also know which upgrades insurance will cover versus what homeowners pay out-of-pocket.

Check their current credentials — ensure they're properly licensed with the City of Calgary, carry adequate liability insurance (minimum \$2 million), and have current WCB Alberta coverage. Flood rebuilds often involve structural work, electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems, so you want a general contractor who can coordinate all trades or specialists in each area.

Browse verified contractors in our Calgary Construction Network directory, and specifically ask about their flood rebuild experience during your initial consultations. The contractors who rebuilt these communities after 2013

developed invaluable expertise that will serve you well if you're dealing with flood damage or want to flood-proof your home.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- Mr & Mrs Paintastic Inc ?
- The Original Workshop ?
- UR COWRY CABINETS ?

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Q2

Should i hire a structural engineer before underpinning my tuscan basement or just trust the contractor?

You absolutely need a structural engineer before underpinning your Tuscan basement. This is not optional — underpinning involves modifying your home's foundation, which is the most critical structural element of your house.

Why a structural engineer is mandatory for underpinning work starts with Alberta's regulatory requirements. The City of Calgary requires engineered drawings for any underpinning project, and your building permit application must include structural calculations sealed by a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) registered in Alberta. No legitimate contractor should suggest proceeding without proper engineering — it's illegal and puts your entire home at risk.

Tuscan's soil conditions make engineering even more critical. Your neighbourhood sits on Calgary's notorious expansive clay soils, which shrink and swell dramatically with moisture changes. These soils create unique challenges for underpinning because they can exert tremendous lateral pressure on foundation walls and cause differential settlement. A structural engineer will assess your specific soil conditions, existing foundation type, and design an underpinning system that accounts for Calgary's freeze-thaw cycles and clay soil movement.

The engineering process typically costs \$2,000-\$5,000 for a residential underpinning project, but this investment protects a much larger one. The engineer will evaluate your existing foundation, determine the appropriate underpinning method (concrete piers, helical piles, or mass concrete), specify excavation sequences to prevent collapse, and design temporary shoring systems. They'll also coordinate with a geotechnical engineer if soil testing

is required — common in areas like Tuscany where soil conditions vary significantly even within the same block.

Red flags from contractors include anyone who says "we don't need an engineer for this" or "we'll handle the permits." Legitimate underpinning contractors work with structural engineers regularly and will recommend engineers they trust. They understand that proper engineering protects both you and them from liability. Contractors who resist engineering oversight are either inexperienced with underpinning or cutting dangerous corners.

The permit process through the City of Calgary requires engineered drawings, and you'll need multiple inspections during construction. Safety Codes Officers will inspect the excavation, reinforcement placement, and concrete pours. This isn't bureaucratic red tape — underpinning failures can cause catastrophic foundation collapse, and Calgary has seen expensive disasters from improperly executed underpinning projects.

Your next steps should be hiring a structural engineer first, before getting contractor quotes. The engineer's drawings and specifications will ensure all contractors are bidding on the same scope of work, making quotes more comparable. Expect the entire process — engineering, permits, and construction — to take 3-6 months depending on complexity and weather conditions.

Browse verified contractors experienced with underpinning projects in our Calgary Construction Network directory, but remember: even the best contractor needs proper engineering guidance for this critical structural work.

Find a Basement Renovations Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- Bin There Dump That ?
- Chems & Sons Construction/Cleaning Services Inc ?
- Goldray Glass ?

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Q3

Should I finish a basement bathroom myself or hire out the plumbing and do the drywall myself?

For a basement bathroom, you should definitely hire a licensed plumber for all plumbing work and can tackle the drywall yourself if you have basic DIY skills. In Alberta, plumbing rough-in and connections require

permits and inspections by certified Safety Codes Officers employed by the City of Calgary, and this work must be done by licensed professionals.

Why You Must Hire a Plumber

Basement bathroom plumbing is complex work that involves connecting to your home's main drain stack, installing proper venting, and potentially installing a sewage ejector pump if the bathroom is below the main sewer line level. This is especially common in Calgary where many basements sit below grade. The plumber will need to obtain plumbing permits, ensure proper slope on drain lines, install appropriate venting to prevent sewer gas buildup, and have all rough-in work inspected before closing up walls.

Additionally, basement bathrooms in Calgary often require special considerations due to our expansive clay soils and potential for foundation movement. A licensed plumber understands local soil conditions and will install flexible connections where needed to prevent future leaks from settling. They'll also ensure compliance with the Alberta Building Code requirements for fixture placement, clearances, and accessibility.

DIY Drywall Work

Once the plumbing rough-in is complete and inspected, drywall installation is absolutely something you can handle yourself. Basement bathrooms typically use moisture-resistant drywall (greenboard or cement board) behind tile areas, and regular drywall elsewhere. You'll need to work around the plumbing fixtures carefully, but basic drywall skills include measuring, cutting, hanging sheets, taping joints, and applying multiple coats of compound.

Cost Breakdown

Professional plumbing rough-in for a basement bathroom typically runs \$2,500-\$5,000 in the Calgary market, depending on complexity and whether you need a sewage pump. DIY drywall materials cost \$200-\$500, while hiring it out would add another \$800-\$1,500. By doing the drywall yourself, you're saving money on the easier portion while ensuring the critical plumbing work meets code.

Next Steps

Start by getting quotes from licensed plumbers in our Calgary directory for the rough-in work. Once that's complete and inspected, you can proceed with drywall installation. Remember that basement bathrooms also require proper ventilation (exhaust fan) and electrical work (GFCI outlets), which also need permits and professional installation.

Find a Bathroom Renovations Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- Allstar Insulation Ltd. ?
- Dealtwith. ?
- Chems & Sons Construction/Cleaning Services Inc ?

Browse all contractors ?

My contractor says we need a structural engineer for a load-bearing wall removal in our 1912 heritage home in Mission. Is that normal?

Yes, absolutely normal and required. Removing any load-bearing wall requires a structural engineer's assessment and stamped drawings, especially in a 1912 heritage home where the structural system is over 100 years old and construction methods were very different from today's standards.

Your contractor is following proper protocol here. Under the Alberta Building Code, any structural modification requires engineered drawings and calculations. A structural engineer will assess how the load is currently being carried, design appropriate beam sizing and support posts, and provide stamped drawings for your building permit application. This isn't just good practice—it's legally required, and the City of Calgary will not issue a building permit for load-bearing wall removal without professional engineering.

Heritage properties add another layer of complexity. Since your Mission home is from 1912, it likely has balloon framing or early platform framing with dimensional lumber that's different from modern materials. The engineer needs to understand the existing structural system, load paths, and how the building has settled over 110+ years. Mission has several heritage-designated and heritage-inventory properties, so check the City of Calgary Heritage Register to see if your home has any heritage restrictions that could affect your renovation plans.

The engineering process typically costs \$1,500-\$4,000 depending on complexity, but it's essential for safety and insurance purposes. The engineer will specify the correct beam size (often a steel I-beam or engineered lumber beam), proper connections, and any temporary shoring required during construction. They'll also consider Calgary's specific loads—our deep frost line, snow loads, and the expansive clay soils that cause foundation movement over time.

Your contractor should coordinate with the engineer to ensure the proposed beam fits within your ceiling height and doesn't interfere with mechanical systems. In older homes, you might discover knob-and-tube wiring, cast iron plumbing, or other surprises that affect the structural work.

Next steps: Have your contractor arrange the structural engineer consultation, apply for your building permit with the engineered drawings, and ensure all work is inspected by a Safety Codes Officer. Don't proceed without proper permits—the liability and insurance implications are serious, especially in a heritage home.

Find verified structural engineers and contractors experienced with heritage homes in our Calgary directory at Calgary Construction Network.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- Allure Residential & Commercial inc ?
- UR COWRY CABINETS ?
- Amar Homes Inc ?

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Q5

Should I DIY install smart thermostats on a multi-zone radiant floor system or hire an HVAC technician?

You should hire a licensed HVAC technician for smart thermostat installation on a multi-zone radiant floor system. While single-zone forced air thermostats are often DIY-friendly, radiant floor systems with multiple zones involve complex wiring, zone controls, and potential boiler/hydronic system integration that requires professional expertise.

Multi-zone radiant systems are significantly more complex than standard HVAC setups. Each zone typically has its own thermostat controlling motorized zone valves or circulation pumps, and these components must communicate properly with your boiler or heat source. Smart thermostats add another layer of complexity with WiFi setup, scheduling algorithms, and integration with existing zone control panels. **The wiring alone can involve multiple low-voltage circuits, transformer connections, and zone control boards** that aren't intuitive for most homeowners.

In Alberta, thermostat replacement on radiant systems often requires electrical permits and inspections, especially if new wiring is needed or if you're upgrading the zone control system. The City of Calgary oversees electrical permits and inspections, and improperly installed thermostats can create safety hazards or damage expensive boiler equipment. **Calgary's extreme temperature swings from chinooks make proper thermostat calibration critical** — a misconfigured smart thermostat on radiant heat can lead to uncomfortable temperature swings or frozen pipes during -30°C cold snaps.

Professional installation ensures proper integration with your existing zone controls, correct wiring to prevent equipment damage, and optimal programming for radiant heat's slower response time compared to forced air systems. HVAC technicians understand how to configure smart thermostats for radiant systems' thermal mass characteristics and can set up features like outdoor temperature compensation that are crucial for efficient

operation in Calgary's climate.

The cost difference between DIY and professional installation is typically \$200-500 per zone, but the peace of mind and warranty protection are worth it. A licensed technician will also ensure your system qualifies for any available energy efficiency rebates and can optimize settings for Calgary's heating demands.

Next steps: Get quotes from licensed HVAC contractors who specialize in radiant heating systems. Ask about their experience with your specific smart thermostat brand and whether they offer ongoing support for programming and troubleshooting. Find verified HVAC professionals in our Calgary Construction Network directory who understand radiant systems and smart home integration.

Find a Hvac Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [The Original Workshop ?](#)
- [Durable Decks ?](#)
- [Mike's Restoration Service ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Q6

How do you find a contractor in Calgary who knows heritage window restoration for designated properties in Sunnyside or Rosedale?

Finding a heritage window restoration specialist in Calgary requires targeting contractors who specifically understand the strict requirements for designated heritage properties, as regular window contractors may not be familiar with the preservation standards and approval processes required by the City of Calgary.

Heritage window restoration is a specialized field that combines traditional craftsmanship with modern building science. For designated heritage properties in neighbourhoods like Sunnyside and Rosedale, you'll need contractors who understand both the **Heritage Planning Application process** and the technical requirements for restoring windows to heritage standards while meeting modern energy efficiency and safety codes.

Start with the City of Calgary's Heritage Planning team at 403-268-5311 or heritage@calgary.ca. They maintain a list of contractors who have successfully completed heritage projects and understand the approval process. Since

designated properties require Heritage Planning approval for any exterior changes, including window work, the Heritage Planning team can recommend contractors who have navigated this process successfully. They'll also clarify exactly what work requires approval versus what can be done under routine maintenance.

Look for contractors with specific heritage restoration experience rather than general window installers.

Heritage window restoration often involves rebuilding sash windows, restoring original hardware, reglazing with traditional putty, and matching historical profiles exactly. The contractor should understand the difference between restoration (preserving original materials), rehabilitation (updating for modern use while preserving character), and reconstruction (recreating missing elements). Many heritage projects require a combination of these approaches.

Verify the contractor understands Calgary's heritage approval process. For designated heritage properties, exterior window work typically requires a Heritage Planning Application, which can take 6-12 weeks for approval. The contractor should be able to prepare detailed drawings showing existing conditions, proposed work, and how the restoration will maintain the heritage character. They should also understand which elements can be repaired versus replaced, and how to source appropriate materials.

Check references from other heritage properties in Calgary's inner-city neighbourhoods. Sunnyside, Rosedale, Hillhurst-Sunnyside, Inglewood, and Mission have numerous heritage-designated properties. Ask potential contractors for examples of their heritage window work and contact those property owners about their experience. Heritage work requires patience, attention to detail, and often costs 2-3 times more than standard window replacement.

Consider the timing and seasonal constraints. Heritage window restoration often requires removing windows for shop restoration, which means temporary boarding or plastic sheeting during Calgary winters. Most heritage window work should be scheduled for spring through fall. The contractor should have a heated workshop for winter restoration work and understand how to protect your home during the restoration period.

Budget appropriately for heritage window restoration. Expect \$800-\$2,500 per window opening depending on size, condition, and complexity. Full restoration of original sash windows with new glazing, hardware restoration, and weatherstripping typically costs \$1,200-\$2,000 per window. If windows are beyond repair, custom reproduction windows matching original profiles can cost \$1,500-\$3,000 per window. This is significantly more expensive than standard window replacement but maintains the heritage value of your property.

Browse verified contractors in our Calgary directory who have experience with heritage and restoration projects. Look specifically for contractors who mention heritage work, historical restoration, or custom millwork in their profiles, as these are more likely to have the specialized skills needed for designated heritage properties.

Find a Windows Doors Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [K&S CHIMNEY SERVICES ?](#)
- [Bow Valley Climate Management Ltd ?](#)
- [Onsite Contracting and Electrical Services ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

How do I find a plumber in Calgary who is experienced with backflow preventer installations for commercial kitchens?

Finding a plumber experienced with commercial backflow preventer installations requires looking for specific certifications and commercial experience, as this specialized work goes beyond typical residential plumbing.

Commercial backflow prevention is a highly regulated area in Alberta that requires licensed plumbers with additional backflow prevention certification. You'll need a plumber who holds both a valid Alberta plumbing license and **backflow prevention certification** through an accredited training provider. The City of Calgary issues plumbing permits (under the Safety Codes Council of Alberta framework) and inspections, so any work must be done by a licensed professional and properly inspected.

Start by contacting established commercial plumbing companies rather than residential-focused plumbers. Commercial kitchen plumbing involves complex requirements including grease interceptors, floor drains, equipment connections, and backflow prevention devices that must comply with both the Alberta Building Code and local health regulations. Look for companies that specifically mention commercial kitchen experience, restaurant work, or backflow prevention services in their marketing materials.

Key qualifications to verify include current Alberta plumbing license, backflow prevention certification, commercial liability insurance (minimum \$2M), and WCB Alberta coverage. Ask for references from recent commercial kitchen installations and verify they understand Alberta Health Services requirements for food service establishments. The plumber should be familiar with different types of backflow preventers (RPZ assemblies, double check valve assemblies, atmospheric vacuum breakers) and know which type your specific application requires.

Calgary's commercial kitchen requirements are stringent due to health code compliance. Your backflow preventer installation will need a plumbing permit through the City of Calgary, and the device must be tested annually by a certified backflow prevention tester. The City maintains a list of certified testers, and many commercial plumbers also provide this ongoing testing service.

Get quotes from at least three commercial plumbing contractors and ensure each quote includes the permit, proper backflow preventer selection, installation, initial testing, and certification. Expect to pay \$2,000-\$8,000+ depending on the complexity and type of backflow preventer required. Don't choose based on price alone - improper installation can result in health code violations and expensive re-work.

Browse verified plumbing contractors with commercial experience in our Calgary Construction Network directory, where you can filter by specialty and read reviews from other business owners who've had similar work completed.

Find a Kitchen Renovations Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- PLATINUM Pool & Spa Services Ltd ?
- Calgary Asbestos Abatement Ltd ?
- Factory Direct Kitchen Cabinets Inc. ?

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Q8

My contractor poured my patio in direct sun in July, and now it's spalling. Is this on them or bad luck?

This is almost certainly on your contractor. Pouring concrete in direct sun during Calgary's hot July weather without proper protection is a fundamental violation of concrete best practices and likely constitutes defective workmanship.

Why This Happened

Concrete poured in direct sunlight during hot weather (especially July in Calgary when temperatures can hit 30°C+) cures too rapidly on the surface while the interior remains plastic. This creates differential shrinkage that leads to surface scaling, spalling, and cracking. The rapid moisture loss from the surface prevents proper hydration of the cement, creating a weak, powdery surface layer that eventually flakes off.

Professional concrete contractors know that hot weather pours require specific precautions: scheduling pours for early morning or evening, using sunshades or tarps, continuous misting or wet curing, plastic sheeting, and sometimes admixtures to slow the cure. In Calgary's dry climate and intense summer sun at our altitude (1,048m above sea level), these precautions aren't optional—they're essential for a durable finish.

Your Legal Position

Under Alberta law, contractors have an implied warranty that their work will be performed in a workmanlike manner using accepted industry standards. The Alberta Building Code and CSA standards for concrete placement specifically address hot weather concreting requirements. A contractor who ignores these standards and delivers a defective product is liable for replacement costs.

Document everything: Take photos of the spalling, keep records of when the concrete was poured (date, weather conditions), and get a written assessment from another concrete contractor. Check Environment Canada's historical weather data for that day to confirm temperatures and conditions.

Next Steps

Contact your contractor immediately in writing (email creates a paper trail) describing the defect and requesting remediation. Give them a reasonable opportunity to assess and repair, but don't let them convince you this is "normal settling" or "cosmetic only"—spalling will worsen with freeze-thaw cycles.

If they refuse responsibility, you have options under Alberta's Prompt Payment and Construction Lien Act (PPCLA) and consumer protection laws. For disputes under \$50,000, Alberta's Court of Justice small claims division handles construction defect cases. Document your damages (repair costs, inconvenience) and consider getting a professional assessment from a concrete specialist or engineer.

Prevention for Others

This is exactly why homeowners should verify their contractor's experience with concrete work and ask about their hot weather procedures before hiring. A professional should automatically explain their plan for temperature control, curing methods, and timing when scheduling summer concrete pours.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [SMS Appliances Inc. ?](#)
- [Concrack Inc ?](#)
- [Alpine Exteriors siding and roofing ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Q9

We replaced all our windows last year, and the house is still drafty in January. What did the contractor miss?

Even with new windows, drafts can persist if the installation wasn't done properly or if other air leakage points weren't addressed. The most common culprits are poor window installation, inadequate air sealing around

the frames, or drafts coming from completely different sources that feel like they're from the windows.

Window Installation Issues are the primary suspect when new windows still feel drafty. Many contractors focus on getting the window square and level but skimp on air sealing. The gap between the window frame and rough opening should be filled with expanding foam or backer rod and sealant, not just insulation. In Calgary's extreme temperature swings, these gaps expand and contract significantly, and without proper sealing, cold air infiltrates around the entire perimeter. Check around your window frames for visible gaps, especially at the corners where the header meets the side jambs.

Improper flashing and weatherproofing can also create the sensation of drafts. If the exterior wasn't properly flashed with house wrap or building paper integration, moisture can penetrate and create cold spots that feel like drafts. This is particularly problematic in Calgary where chinook temperature swings cause rapid freeze-thaw cycles that can open up small gaps in caulking and sealants.

Other common draft sources that homeowners often mistake for window problems include electrical outlets on exterior walls, baseboards along exterior walls, attic hatches, and gaps around light fixtures. Calgary's expansive clay soils can cause foundation settling that opens gaps between the basement and main floor. Even new windows won't solve drafts coming from these areas.

Calgary's Climate Considerations make proper installation critical. With winter temperatures regularly hitting -30°C and chinook winds that can swing temperatures 20-30°C in hours, any air leakage becomes immediately noticeable. The extreme temperature differential between inside (21°C) and outside (-30°C) creates significant pressure differences that drive cold air through even tiny gaps.

Professional Assessment is your next step. Have a qualified contractor perform a blower door test or thermal imaging scan to identify exactly where air is leaking. Many window installers in Calgary offer this service, or you can hire an energy auditor. The Canada Greener Homes Grant program includes pre- and post-retrofit energy evaluations that can identify air leakage issues. If the problem is installation-related, document it with photos and thermal imaging before contacting your window contractor about warranty coverage.

What to Check Immediately: Walk around each window with an incense stick or candle on a windy day - the smoke will show you exactly where air is moving. Look for gaps in caulking, especially where the window frame meets the siding. Check that weatherstripping around the sash is intact and properly compressed when closed.

Find verified window and insulation contractors in our Calgary directory who can properly diagnose and fix air sealing issues.

Find a Windows Doors Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [Riverstone Electric Inc ?](#)
- [The Stair Shoppe ?](#)
- [Upper Cut Landscaping LTD ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Should I hire a structural engineer before underpinning my basement or just trust the contractor?

You absolutely should hire a structural engineer before any underpinning work in Calgary. This isn't optional — it's essential for safety, code compliance, and protecting your investment in one of Canada's most challenging soil conditions.

Underpinning involves excavating beneath your existing foundation and installing new structural support, which is inherently risky work. In Calgary's expansive clay soils, foundation movement and settlement are common issues, but the solution requires precise engineering calculations to account for soil conditions, frost depth (4+ feet in Calgary), and the structural loads your foundation carries. A qualified structural engineer will assess your specific situation, determine the appropriate underpinning method (mass concrete, beam and base, mini-piles, or helical piers), and provide stamped drawings that meet Alberta Building Code requirements.

The regulatory reality is clear — the City of Calgary and surrounding municipalities require engineered drawings for underpinning work. Your contractor cannot obtain the necessary building permits without these professional drawings. The City of Calgary requires that structural modifications be designed by qualified professionals and inspected at multiple stages. Any contractor suggesting they can "figure it out as they go" or avoid the engineering step is either inexperienced with underpinning or willing to cut dangerous corners.

Calgary's soil conditions make engineering even more critical. The bentonite clay that underlies much of the city expands when wet and shrinks when dry, creating tremendous pressure on foundations. Chinook temperature swings cause extreme freeze-thaw cycles that stress foundation systems. An engineer familiar with local conditions will specify the appropriate underpinning depth, reinforcement, and drainage systems to handle these unique challenges. They'll also identify any existing structural issues that need addressing before underpinning begins.

Cost-wise, expect to pay \$3,000-\$8,000 for structural engineering on a typical underpinning project. This might seem expensive upfront, but it's a fraction of your total project cost (\$15,000-\$50,000+ for underpinning depending on scope) and essential insurance against catastrophic failure. The engineer's involvement doesn't end with drawings — they'll typically provide construction review and inspection services to ensure the work meets their specifications.

Choose your engineer carefully — look for someone with specific underpinning experience in Calgary's soil conditions. Ask for references from recent underpinning projects and verify their Professional Engineers Alberta (APEGA) registration. Your contractor should welcome working with an engineer, not resist it. Quality contractors understand that engineered solutions protect everyone involved and often result in more efficient construction methods.

Next steps: Hire the structural engineer first, before selecting your contractor. The engineer's assessment and recommendations will help you get accurate quotes from contractors and ensure everyone is bidding on the same properly-designed scope of work. Find qualified structural engineers and underpinning contractors in our Calgary directory who understand local soil conditions and regulatory requirements.

Find a Basement Renovations Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- Durable Decks ?
- Turnbull masonry ?
- Aurora Electrical Technologies ?

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Q11

How do you verify a contractor is properly licensed and insured before signing a bathroom renovation contract in Acadia?

Before signing any bathroom renovation contract in Acadia, verify your contractor holds valid permits, carries proper insurance, and is registered with WCB Alberta. This verification process protects you from liability and ensures quality work that meets Alberta Building Code standards.

Start with permit verification through the City of Calgary. Your contractor must obtain building, electrical, and plumbing permits for bathroom renovations involving structural changes, new electrical circuits, or plumbing relocations. In Calgary, permits are issued through the City's building department (call 311 or visit calgary.ca/development). Ask your contractor to provide permit numbers before work begins, or verify their ability to pull permits by checking their trade certifications. Licensed electricians and plumbers in Alberta are certified through Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training - you can verify active licenses through their accredited agencies.

Insurance verification requires checking multiple coverage types. Request a current Certificate of Liability Insurance showing minimum \$2 million general liability coverage. The certificate should name you as an additional insured and be issued directly from the insurance company, not photocopied. For contractors with employees, verify active WCB Alberta coverage at wcb.ab.ca using their account number. This protects you from workplace injury claims on your property. Many contractors also carry Errors & Omissions insurance for professional liability -

ask about this coverage for complex renovations.

WCB Alberta registration is mandatory for any contractor with employees. Even sole proprietors should carry liability insurance, but those with employees must have active WCB coverage. Verify the contractor's WCB account number and ensure coverage is current. Uninsured contractors put you at serious financial risk if someone is injured during your renovation. The WCB website allows you to verify coverage status using the contractor's account number.

Get everything in writing before signing. Alberta's Consumer Protection Act requires written contracts for renovation work over \$1,000. The contract should specify permit responsibilities, insurance requirements, material specifications, timeline, and payment schedule. Never pay large amounts upfront - Alberta's Prompt Payment and Construction Lien Act allows contractors to lien your property for unpaid work, but also protects you from paying for incomplete work. A typical payment schedule is 10% down, progress payments tied to completion milestones, and final payment after completion and lien period expiration.

Red flags include contractors who can't provide insurance certificates, refuse to pull permits, demand large upfront payments, or pressure you to sign immediately. Door-to-door contractors are particularly risky - Alberta's Consumer Protection Act gives you 10 days to cancel door-to-door sales contracts. Always get multiple quotes and verify credentials independently.

For bathroom renovations in Acadia specifically, expect building permits for structural changes, electrical permits for new circuits or GFCI upgrades, and plumbing permits for fixture relocations. The City of Calgary requires permits for most bathroom renovations beyond simple fixture swaps. Processing time is typically 2-4 weeks for residential permits. Your contractor should handle permit applications, but verify they're properly submitted before work begins.

Browse verified contractors in our Calgary directory who have already been screened for proper licensing and insurance requirements.

Find a Bathroom Renovations Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [PLATINUM Pool & Spa Services Ltd ?](#)
- [Element Painting Inc. ?](#)
- [Venkor Group Inc ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Does my contractor actually require 4-foot frost footings for a new garage in Calgary?

Yes, your contractor absolutely must install footings below the frost line, which in Calgary is typically 4+ feet (1.2 meters) deep. This isn't optional—it's required by the Alberta Building Code and enforced by Safety Codes Officers during inspections.

Calgary has one of the deepest frost lines in Canada due to our extreme winter temperatures that regularly hit -30°C or colder. When soil freezes, it expands and creates tremendous upward pressure called frost heaving. If your garage footings sit above the frost line, this heaving force will literally lift and crack your foundation, causing structural damage that can cost tens of thousands to repair.

The **Alberta Building Code (National Building Code - 2023 Alberta Edition)** specifically requires all footings to extend below the frost penetration depth for your location. In Greater Calgary, this means footings must typically extend 1.2-1.5 meters (4-5 feet) below finished grade. Your contractor will need to excavate to this depth, pour concrete footings, then build the foundation walls up to grade level.

Calgary's expansive clay soils make proper footing depth even more critical. Our bentonite clay soils not only freeze and heave, but also swell dramatically when wet and shrink when dry. This creates additional foundation movement that shallow footings simply cannot withstand. The combination of frost action and clay movement is why Calgary building inspectors are particularly strict about footing depth requirements.

Your contractor will need to obtain a **building permit** from the City of Calgary (or your local municipality) before starting work. The permit application must include foundation details showing proper footing depth. During construction, a Safety Codes Officer will inspect the excavation and footings before any concrete is poured. If the footings don't meet code depth requirements, you'll fail inspection and need to re-excavate—an expensive mistake.

Don't let any contractor convince you that shallow footings are acceptable because it's "just a garage" or because they'll use different techniques. There are no shortcuts or alternatives to proper footing depth in Calgary's climate. The building code requirements exist because our extreme freeze-thaw cycles and soil conditions demand robust foundations.

The footing excavation and concrete work will add to your project cost, but it's non-negotiable for long-term structural integrity. Expect the foundation work to represent 15-20% of your total garage construction budget, but this investment protects your entire structure for decades to come.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [True North Overhead Doors ?](#)
- [Mr Garage Doors ?](#)
- [Plains Equipment Rentals Corp ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

DIY install LVP flooring on main floor or hire installer for better warranty?

Most homeowners can successfully DIY install LVP flooring on their main floor, and you'll typically get the same manufacturer warranty whether you install it yourself or hire a professional. The key factors are your skill level, available time, and the complexity of your specific layout.

Understanding LVP Warranties LVP manufacturers like Coretec, Lifeproof, and Luxury Vinyl Plank brands typically offer the same product warranty (10-25 years depending on the product) regardless of who installs it. The warranty covers manufacturing defects, wear-through, and sometimes water damage. However, **installation issues aren't covered under manufacturer warranties** — this is where professional installation can provide additional protection through the installer's workmanship warranty.

DIY Advantages for Calgary Homeowners LVP is genuinely DIY-friendly, especially the click-lock floating floor systems. You'll save \$3-8 per square foot on installation costs (Calgary installers typically charge \$4-12/sq ft depending on complexity). For a 1,000 sq ft main floor, that's \$3,000-8,000 in savings. Calgary's dry climate is actually ideal for LVP installation — you won't deal with the humidity issues that complicate hardwood installation. Most LVP can be installed year-round, making it perfect for winter projects when outdoor work isn't possible.

When to Consider Professional Installation Hire a professional if your main floor has **complex layouts with multiple rooms, intricate cuts around built-ins, or transitions to multiple different flooring types**. Stairs, curved walls, and rooms requiring custom transitions (like sunken living rooms common in 1970s Calgary homes) are where professional experience shows. If you're dealing with **subfloor issues** — squeaks, unevenness, or moisture problems common in Calgary's older bungalows — a professional can address these during installation.

Calgary-Specific Considerations Calgary's extreme temperature swings and dry winters mean proper acclimation is crucial. Bring your LVP inside 48 hours before installation and maintain consistent temperature (18-24°C). Many Calgary homes have **concrete subfloors in basements and main floors** — ensure proper moisture testing if installing over concrete. The city's expansive clay soils can cause minor foundation movement, so floating floors (which LVP typically is) are actually preferred over glued-down installations.

Professional Guidance Choose DIY if you're comfortable with measuring, cutting, and have basic tool skills. Most Calgary homeowners successfully install LVP in standard rectangular rooms. **Hire a professional** if you're dealing with multiple room transitions, have time constraints, or want someone else liable for any subfloor prep work. Professional installers in Calgary typically provide 1-2 year workmanship warranties covering installation defects.

Next Steps Calculate your square footage, add 10% for waste, and get quotes from both big box stores (Home Depot, Lowes) and local flooring retailers. If going DIY, rent or buy a quality miter saw, pull bar, and tapping block.

For professional installation, get 3 quotes and verify the installer's WCB Alberta coverage and references from recent Calgary projects.

Find a Flooring Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- SKS Electrical Ltd ?
- New Earth Waste Services Ltd ?
- Universal Slate International Inc. ?

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Q14

How do I find a contractor experienced with post-flood rebuilds in Sunnyside and Hillhurst?

Finding contractors experienced with post-flood rebuilds in Sunnyside and Hillhurst requires targeting professionals who understand Calgary's unique flood risks and have specific experience with these riverside communities.

These inner-city neighborhoods along the Bow River have faced significant flooding, particularly during the devastating 2013 flood and subsequent events. Post-flood rebuilds require specialized knowledge of flood-resistant construction, proper moisture mitigation, and Calgary's specific soil and foundation challenges in flood-prone areas.

Start by looking for contractors with documented flood rebuild experience in these specific communities. Ask potential contractors directly about their work in Sunnyside and Hillhurst post-2013, and request references from homeowners in these areas. Experienced flood rebuild contractors will understand the unique challenges of working with homes that have experienced water damage, including foundation issues, electrical system replacement, insulation concerns, and the need for flood-resistant materials and techniques.

Key qualifications to verify include current WCB Alberta coverage, proper licensing through Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training, and experience with the specific building code requirements for flood-prone areas. These contractors should be familiar with elevated utility installations, flood-resistant insulation materials, and proper moisture barriers. They'll also understand Calgary's permit process for substantial rebuilds and renovations in established communities.

The Alberta New Home Warranty Program (ANHWP) requirements may apply if you're doing a complete rebuild rather than renovation. Verify any contractor doing new construction is properly registered. For major renovations, ensure they understand the Prompt Payment and Construction Lien Act (PPCLA) and can provide proper lien holdback documentation.

Flood rebuild specialists should demonstrate knowledge of Calgary's expansive clay soils, which can shift dramatically after flooding, and understand proper drainage solutions for riverside properties. They should also be familiar with insurance claim processes, as many flood rebuilds involve coordination with insurance adjusters and specific documentation requirements.

Your next steps: Request detailed references from recent Sunnyside and Hillhurst projects, verify all licensing and insurance, and ensure they can provide a comprehensive approach that addresses both immediate rebuild needs and long-term flood resilience. Browse verified contractors in our Calgary directory who can demonstrate specific flood rebuild experience in these riverside communities.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [Calgary Garage Builders Ltd ?](#)
- [Makki Demolition ?](#)
- [G.D.K Drywall LTD. ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Q15

How do I find a contractor in Calgary who specializes in character home renovations without ruining original features in Hillhurst?

Finding a contractor who specializes in character home renovations in Calgary requires looking for professionals with demonstrated experience in heritage and period home restoration, particularly in inner-city neighborhoods like Hillhurst.

Character homes in Hillhurst — many dating from the 1910s-1940s — require contractors who understand heritage construction methods, original materials, and the delicate balance between modern functionality and historical integrity. These homes often feature original hardwood floors, plaster walls, wood trim, built-in cabinetry, and

unique architectural details that need careful preservation during renovation.

Start by looking for contractors with specific heritage experience. Ask potential contractors to show you a portfolio of similar character home projects, particularly in neighborhoods like Hillhurst, Kensington, Mount Pleasant, or Inglewood. The best heritage renovation contractors will have before-and-after photos demonstrating how they've preserved original features while updating homes for modern living. Look for examples of restored original hardwood floors, preserved plaster walls, refurbished built-ins, and carefully matched millwork.

Key questions to ask potential contractors include: Have you worked on homes built before 1950? Can you show me examples of millwork matching and plaster repair? Do you have relationships with specialty suppliers for heritage materials like old-growth fir, period-appropriate hardware, and traditional plaster? How do you handle unexpected discoveries like knob-and-tube wiring or horsehair plaster? These questions will quickly separate contractors who truly understand heritage work from those who don't.

In Calgary's character home market, expect to pay a premium — typically 20-40% more than standard renovations due to the specialized skills, careful work pace, and often custom millwork required. A quality character home renovation might run \$150-\$300 per square foot depending on the scope, compared to \$100-\$200 for standard renovations. However, this investment protects your home's unique value and charm.

Verify that any contractor you're considering is familiar with Calgary's heritage policies. While Hillhurst doesn't have blanket heritage designation, some individual properties may be on the City of Calgary's Heritage Register. Designated heritage properties have strict renovation guidelines, and even heritage-inventory properties have recommended preservation practices. Your contractor should know to check the heritage status before planning major exterior changes.

Look for contractors who understand the unique challenges of Calgary's character homes: dealing with expansive clay soil foundation issues common in older homes, upgrading electrical from knob-and-tube or early panel systems, improving insulation without damaging original plaster, and working with the solid wood construction typical of pre-1950s homes. The best heritage contractors will also understand how to integrate modern systems (HVAC, updated electrical) while maintaining the home's character.

Professional guidance is essential for character home renovations. These projects often uncover surprises — from structural modifications made over decades to outdated systems that need careful updating. A contractor experienced in heritage work will budget time and money for these discoveries and know how to address them while preserving your home's integrity.

Your next step should be to interview at least three contractors with demonstrated heritage experience. Ask to visit current job sites if possible, and definitely ask to speak with previous clients who've had character homes renovated. The right contractor will be passionate about preserving Calgary's architectural heritage while creating

beautiful, functional spaces for modern living.

Browse verified contractors with heritage renovation experience in our Calgary Construction Network directory to find professionals who understand the unique requirements of character home renovations.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [Oxy-Genie Carpet Cleaning Services ?](#)
- [A Green Future ?](#)
- [Johnny B's Painting ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Our general contractor filed for bankruptcy mid-project. What are our rights under the Builders' Lien Act to recover deposits in Alberta?

In Alberta, your rights are protected under the Prompt Payment and Construction Lien Act (PPCLA), not the Builders' Lien Act. When a general contractor files for bankruptcy mid-project, you have several legal avenues to recover deposits and protect your interests, though the process can be complex.

Immediate Steps and Lien Rights

Under Alberta's PPCLA, you may be able to place a lien on your own property to preserve funds for completion of the work. This seems counterintuitive, but it's a legal mechanism to protect money that should go toward finishing your project rather than disappearing into the bankruptcy estate. You have 45 days from when the contractor's work substantially ceased to file a lien, so time is critical.

Any subcontractors or suppliers who haven't been paid by your bankrupt general contractor can also place liens on your property. However, as the property owner, you're protected by the concept of "no double payment" - you shouldn't have to pay twice for the same work or materials. If you can prove you already paid your general contractor for specific work or materials, you may not be liable to pay those subcontractors again.

Holdback Requirements and Bankruptcy

Under the PPCLA, you should have been holding back 10% of all progress payments (called "lien holdback") until 60 days after substantial completion. If the project isn't complete due to bankruptcy, this holdback money should still be in your possession and can be used to pay legitimate subcontractor and supplier claims or to help complete the work. If you released holdback early or didn't maintain proper holdback, you could be personally liable for subcontractor claims up to the amount you should have held back.

Recovery Through Bankruptcy Proceedings

Your deposit and any overpayments become unsecured claims in the bankruptcy proceedings. Unfortunately, unsecured creditors typically recover very little in construction company bankruptcies - often just pennies on the dollar. You'll need to file a proof of claim with the bankruptcy trustee, but don't expect significant recovery through this route.

Insurance and Bonding Options

Check if your contractor had performance bonds or if your homeowner's insurance includes coverage for contractor bankruptcy or abandonment. Some insurance policies include limited coverage for situations like this. If the contractor was working on a new home, they should have been registered with the Alberta New Home Warranty

Program (ANHWP), which provides some protection, though this typically applies to new construction rather than renovations.

Next Steps and Legal Action

Contact a construction lawyer immediately to review your contract and assess your specific situation. The lawyer can help you navigate the lien process, deal with subcontractor claims, and determine if you have grounds for legal action against bonding companies or other parties. Document everything - all payments made, work completed, materials on site, and communications with the contractor.

You'll also need to secure your property and any materials on site, as these may be claimed by the bankruptcy trustee. Take photos of all work completed and materials delivered before they can be removed.

Find verified contractors in our Calgary directory to get quotes for completing the abandoned work - you'll need these estimates for insurance claims and legal proceedings.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [Aurora Electrical Technologies ?](#)
- [Eshine Cleaning Services ?](#)
- [G.D.K Drywall LTD. ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Q17

What questions should I ask contractors bidding on a full gut job of a 1950s bungalow in Mount Pleasant?

When vetting contractors for a full gut renovation of a 1950s Mount Pleasant bungalow, focus on experience with heritage-era homes, permit coordination, and detailed project management—this type of comprehensive renovation requires specialized expertise.

A full gut job on a 1950s war-time bungalow in Mount Pleasant is a complex undertaking that touches every building system. These homes typically have knob-and-tube wiring, galvanized plumbing, minimal insulation, and potential asbestos/lead materials. The right contractor will understand these challenges and have experience

navigating Calgary's permit process for extensive renovations.

Essential Experience Questions

Start by asking about their specific experience with **1940s-1950s Calgary bungalows**. How many full gut jobs have they completed on homes of this era? Can they provide references from similar projects in Mount Pleasant, Altadore, or other inner-city neighborhoods? Request photos of completed work showing before/after transformations. Ask about challenges they've encountered with war-time construction—foundation issues, structural modifications, or heritage considerations.

Inquire about their **team structure and subcontractors**. Who handles electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and structural work? Are these trades licensed and insured in Alberta? Will the same crew work your project from start to finish? How do they coordinate between different trades to avoid delays? A gut renovation requires seamless coordination—electrical rough-in before insulation, plumbing before flooring, HVAC before drywall.

Permits and Code Compliance

Ask how they handle the **permit process** for extensive renovations. Will they pull all necessary permits (building, electrical, plumbing, HVAC) or do you need to coordinate some yourself? What's their experience with Calgary's planning department for projects requiring development permits? How do they ensure work meets current Alberta Building Code requirements while respecting the home's character?

Specifically ask about **hazardous materials assessment**. Do they arrange for asbestos and lead testing before demolition? How do they handle safe removal if hazardous materials are found? This is critical for 1950s homes and affects both timeline and budget. Proper abatement requires certified contractors and can add \$5,000-\$15,000+ to your project.

Project Management and Timeline

Discuss their **project management approach**. How do they sequence work to minimize disruption and weather exposure? What's their typical timeline for a full gut renovation (expect 4-8 months for comprehensive work)? How do they handle unexpected discoveries—rotted sill plates, foundation issues, or structural problems common in 70-year-old homes?

Ask about **communication protocols**. How often will you receive updates? Do they use project management software or apps? Who's your main point of contact when issues arise? How do they handle change orders and additional costs? Get clarity on their process for documenting changes and getting approvals before proceeding.

Structural and Systems Expertise

For Mount Pleasant bungalows, ask about **foundation and structural work**. Have they dealt with Calgary's expansive clay soils causing foundation movement? Can they handle beam replacements, wall removals, or structural modifications? Do they work with structural engineers when needed? Many 1950s homes need foundation repairs or underpinning.

Inquire about **building envelope improvements**. How do they approach insulation upgrades in older homes? What's their strategy for air sealing and vapor barrier installation? How do they handle window and door replacements while maintaining the home's character? Proper insulation and air sealing are crucial for comfort and energy efficiency in Calgary's climate.

Budget and Contract Details

Discuss **pricing structure and payment schedules**. Do they provide fixed-price contracts or cost-plus arrangements? How do they handle allowances for fixtures, flooring, and finishes? What's included in their base price versus optional upgrades? For a full gut job, expect \$150-\$300+ per square foot depending on finishes and structural work required.

Ask about **warranty coverage** on their work. What's covered and for how long? How do they handle callbacks or issues discovered after completion? Do they carry WCB Alberta coverage and \$2M+ liability insurance? Request proof of insurance and WCB registration—verify coverage at wcb.ab.ca.

Calgary-Specific Considerations

Since Mount Pleasant has heritage character, ask about their experience with **heritage-sensitive renovations**. While your home may not be heritage-designated, the neighborhood has character guidelines. How do they balance modern functionality with period-appropriate aesthetics? Can they recommend historically-appropriate materials and finishes?

Discuss **seasonal planning** for your project. How do they protect the home during Calgary winters? What work can continue in cold weather versus what needs to wait for spring? A gut renovation exposes your home to the elements—proper weatherproofing and heating during construction is essential.

Red Flags to Watch For

Be cautious of contractors who can't provide local references, seem unfamiliar with Calgary's permit requirements, or quote significantly below others without clear explanation. Avoid anyone suggesting you can skip permits for "minor" work—a full gut renovation requires comprehensive permitting. Don't hire contractors who can't prove WCB coverage or proper licensing for electrical/gas work.

Next Steps

Interview at least three contractors with specific experience in full gut renovations of 1940s-1950s Calgary homes. Check references thoroughly—visit completed projects if possible. Verify all licensing, insurance, and WCB coverage before signing contracts. Plan for contingencies both in budget (add 15-20% for unexpected issues) and timeline (weather delays, permit processing, material delivery).

Find verified contractors experienced in heritage home renovations in our Calgary directory to ensure you're working with professionals who understand the unique challenges of transforming a 1950s Mount Pleasant bungalow into a modern home while respecting its character.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- Alpine Exteriors siding and roofing ?
- Wise Abatement ?
- PLATINUM Pool & Spa Services Ltd ?

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Q18

What contractors in Calgary specialize in universal design for aging in place renovations?

Universal design and aging-in-place renovations require specialized contractors who understand both accessibility codes and the unique needs of older adults. In Calgary's market, you'll want to look for contractors with experience in barrier-free design, bathroom safety modifications, and mobility-friendly home adaptations.

Key specialists to look for include general contractors who focus on accessibility renovations, certified aging-in-place specialists (CAPS), and bathroom renovation companies that specialize in walk-in showers and grab bar installations. Many established renovation companies in Calgary have developed expertise in this growing market as the population ages.

The most common aging-in-place projects include **bathroom safety renovations** (walk-in showers, comfort-height toilets, grab bars, non-slip flooring), **kitchen accessibility updates** (lowered counters, pull-out shelves, lever-style handles), **stairway safety improvements** (railings, better lighting, stair lifts), and **doorway widening** for wheelchair or walker access. These modifications must comply with the Alberta Building Code accessibility

requirements, and many qualify for the **Medical Expense Tax Credit** on your federal income tax return.

Calgary-specific considerations include working around the city's older housing stock - many homes built in the 1960s-1980s have narrow doorways, small bathrooms, and split-level designs that present unique challenges for accessibility modifications. The city's **expansive clay soils** can also affect foundation-level accessibility projects like ramp installations, requiring proper engineering and drainage considerations.

Professional guidance is essential for major accessibility renovations because they often involve structural changes, electrical work (for improved lighting and outlets), and plumbing modifications (for accessible bathrooms). All electrical and plumbing work must be done by licensed contractors and inspected by certified Safety Codes Officers employed by the City of Calgary system. Building permits are required for structural changes like doorway widening or bathroom expansions.

Funding options in Alberta include the **Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL)** program for some equipment, the federal **Home Accessibility Tax Credit** (up to \$10,000 in eligible expenses), and some private insurance coverage. Veterans may qualify for additional support through Veterans Affairs Canada programs.

Next steps: Start by getting a professional accessibility assessment from an occupational therapist or CAPS-certified professional to identify your specific needs. Then find verified contractors in our Calgary directory who have experience with accessibility renovations. Get multiple quotes and ask to see examples of their previous aging-in-place projects, particularly bathroom and kitchen accessibility work.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [Element Painting Inc. ?](#)
- [Safe Home Radon Solutions ?](#)
- [KMP exterior ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Does anyone recommend a good HVAC contractor in Dalhousie who is honest about whether you actually need a new furnace?

Finding an honest HVAC contractor in Calgary who won't oversell you is crucial — look for established companies with strong reputations who provide detailed diagnostics before recommending replacement.

The best HVAC contractors will always start with a thorough inspection and diagnostic test of your existing system. They should check your heat exchanger for cracks, test combustion efficiency, measure airflow, inspect your ductwork, and review your energy bills before suggesting replacement. A reputable contractor will give you repair options alongside replacement costs, explain the remaining lifespan of your current system, and help you make an informed decision based on your budget and comfort needs.

Red flags to avoid include door-to-door sales, high-pressure tactics, quotes given without proper inspection, or contractors who immediately recommend replacement without explaining what's actually wrong with your current system. In Calgary's competitive HVAC market, honest contractors know their reputation depends on customer satisfaction, not quick sales.

For Dalhousie specifically, you're in an established northwest community with many 1970s-1980s homes that often have original or aging furnaces. Many of these systems can be repaired and maintained for several more years if properly serviced. However, if your furnace is 20+ years old with an efficiency below 80% AFUE, replacement with a high-efficiency unit (96%+ AFUE) might make financial sense given Calgary's long heating season and current natural gas prices.

What to expect from quality HVAC contractors in the Calgary market: they should be licensed gas fitters certified through Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training, carry WCB Alberta coverage, provide written estimates, pull proper permits for new installations, and offer warranties on both equipment and labor. Installation of a new high-efficiency furnace typically requires a gas permit and inspection by an accredited Safety Codes Officer.

Typical furnace replacement costs in Calgary range from \$4,500-\$8,000 for a quality high-efficiency gas furnace with professional installation, depending on your home size, ductwork modifications needed, and equipment brand. Repairs on existing systems typically cost \$200-\$800 unless major components like the heat exchanger need replacement.

You can find verified HVAC contractors in our Calgary Construction Network directory who serve the Dalhousie area. Look for companies with established track records, proper licensing, and customer reviews that specifically mention honest assessments and fair pricing.

Find a Hvac Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- Image Line Painting ?
- Allure Residential & Commercial inc ?
- Blue-Sky Window Cleaning ?

Browse all contractors ?

Q20

What is the best gravel base depth for a concrete driveway on clay soil in Cranston? My contractor said 6 inches, but I heard 12 inches is better?

Your contractor's recommendation of 6 inches is likely adequate for most Calgary residential driveways, but 12 inches would provide superior long-term performance on Calgary's challenging clay soils. Given that Cranston sits on expansive clay that's notorious for freeze-thaw movement, the extra investment in base depth is often worth it.

The **standard approach** in Calgary calls for 6 inches of compacted granular base (typically 3/4" minus crushed gravel) under a 4-6 inch concrete slab. This meets Alberta Building Code requirements and works well for most residential applications. However, Calgary's **expansive bentonite clay soils** present unique challenges that make a deeper base beneficial. These clays swell dramatically when wet and shrink when dry, creating significant ground movement that can crack concrete over time.

A 12-inch granular base provides several advantages on clay soils. The deeper aggregate layer creates better drainage, reducing water infiltration to the clay subgrade. It also provides a more stable platform that better distributes loads and minimizes differential settlement. The extra 6 inches acts as a buffer zone between the concrete and the problematic clay below. Many experienced Calgary contractors recommend 8-12 inches of base on clay soils, especially for driveways that will see heavy vehicle traffic.

Cranston's specific conditions make this even more relevant. The community was built on former agricultural land with significant clay content, and many homeowners have experienced foundation and concrete issues related to soil movement. The area's relatively new development means the clay hasn't fully stabilized from construction disturbance. Additionally, Cranston's location means exposure to Calgary's extreme chinook temperature swings, which accelerate freeze-thaw cycling in saturated clay soils.

Cost considerations for the upgrade are reasonable. The additional 6 inches of gravel typically adds \$3-6 per square foot to the project cost - so roughly \$600-1,200 extra for a typical two-car driveway. Compare this to the \$8,000-15,000 cost of replacing a failed driveway in 5-10 years, and the investment makes financial sense.

Professional guidance suggests discussing soil conditions with your contractor. A geotechnical assessment isn't typically required for residential driveways, but if you're seeing clay soil that gets sticky when wet and cracks when dry, that's expansive clay. Proper drainage around the driveway perimeter is equally important - ensure positive drainage away from the concrete and consider installing weeping tile if water tends to pond near the driveway area.

Your next steps should include asking your contractor about upgrading to 8-12 inches of base, ensuring proper compaction in lifts (don't dump 12 inches at once), and discussing drainage details. A reputable contractor will understand Calgary's soil challenges and be willing to explain their reasoning for the 6-inch recommendation versus the benefits of going deeper.

Find a Masonry Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [YYC CABINETS INC ?](#)
- [The Basement renovators ?](#)
- [Electric Eel Sewer & Drain Specialists ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

Q21

What is the best gravel base for a concrete driveway on clay soil in Cranston? My contractor said 6 inches, but I heard 12 inches is recommended?

Your contractor's 6-inch recommendation is likely insufficient for Calgary's expansive clay soils, especially in newer communities like Cranston. For concrete driveways on clay in the Calgary area, 8-12 inches of properly compacted granular base is typically recommended to prevent cracking and settling.

Clay soil challenges in Calgary are particularly severe due to our bentonite clay that expands dramatically when wet and shrinks when dry. Cranston, being a newer southeast community, sits on these challenging soils that require extra attention for any concrete work. The freeze-thaw cycles from our chinook weather patterns make

proper base preparation even more critical — temperatures can swing 20-30°C in a single day, creating extreme stress on inadequately supported concrete.

The ideal base system for your concrete driveway should include 8-12 inches of Class II crushed gravel (3/4" minus) compacted in 4-inch lifts to 95% standard proctor density. This material provides excellent drainage and load distribution. Some contractors prefer a two-layer system: 6 inches of Class II topped with 2-3 inches of Class I (road crush) for the final grade. The key is proper compaction — each lift must be compacted with a plate tamper or vibratory roller before adding the next layer.

Drainage considerations are crucial on clay soils. Your base should extend 6 inches beyond the concrete edges and slope away from structures. Consider installing weeping tile along the edges if drainage is poor, as standing water will cause the clay to expand and heave your driveway. The concrete itself should be 5-6 inches thick with 30MPa strength and air entrainment for freeze-thaw resistance.

Professional guidance is essential here because inadequate base preparation on clay soils almost guarantees future problems. A structural engineer or experienced concrete contractor familiar with Calgary's soil conditions should assess your specific site. The extra cost of proper base preparation (typically \$8-15 per square foot) is far less than replacing a failed driveway in 3-5 years.

Next steps: Get a second opinion from a contractor experienced with clay soils, request soil compaction testing, and don't compromise on base thickness. The Alberta Building Code and good engineering practice support the 8-12 inch recommendation for your soil conditions.

Find a Masonry Contractor

Calgary Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [G.D.K Drywall LTD. ?](#)
- [Safe Home Radon Solutions ?](#)
- [New Earth Waste Services Ltd ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

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