

“I wasn’t expecting that.”

-By *your* Staff Writer for the Property Network, Matt Giles

That what the homeowner said to my old boss when we told her we had to rip out her living room ceiling. We were hired to do an addition, kitchen and one bathroom renovation. Now we had to rip out her living room ceiling.

She was not happy at all about that. She called her husband in a panic. The reason we had to rip out the ceiling is because our electrician was chasing down old wires from other places in the house we demoed and was finding live wires behind the sheetrock.

Apparently the previous owner thought he was an electrician and decided to run wires all over the house incase he ever needed them there. The only thing was, the wires were tied into the electrical panel and were live. And live buried wires could leave you dead! That’s how fires start.

It would have been one thing if they were properly capped off with a wire nut inside an electrical box (even though by code you are not supposed to cover up an electrical box with out access to it). Nope this clown ran these wires and just taped off the ends and left them free floating in the ceiling.

So even after we explained everything to the homeowner she still needed to call her husband before we did anything. I understand that, it’s more work. My boss was a nice guy and told her that he would cover the labor if she paid for the sheetrock. It was the safety of her family and technically by code she had too, but she made the right decision and said yes.

The point I am trying to make, is that with any renovation to your house, there could be surprises. You never know what you will get when you start opening up walls. By law if a contractor opens up your walls and finds violations of any kind they have to fix them.

So you might be wondering what they could possible find....Well if you have an old house you could find old cloth wires that fall apart to the touch. If you had any kind of major leaks over time (or the previous owners had the leaks), you could find rot in your framing that has to be fixed. Plumbing surprises are always fun! But don’t freak out, just plan ahead for them. In the trades they are called “extras” and they almost always happen on any job. You are not alone. If you luck out your contractor may work with you on some of the cost. Maybe not, but either way the work has to be done.

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