



Home Tips



• CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC., 3697 HABERSHAM LANE, DULUTH, GEORGIA 30096, 770-849-0920 • FEBRUARY 2009 •



Remodeling Cost vs Value Report 2008-09

Survey averages are down, but less than expected. A slowing rate of decline could mean that remodeling is turning the corner. But the global financial crisis could make the outlook worse before it gets better.

The results of the 2008-09 Cost vs. Value Report are surprising. A sluggish real estate market and an increasing number of foreclosures (while the survey was in the field this summer) led Remodeling Magazine to expect that the ratio of a remodeling project's cost to the value it retains at resale would drop substantially more than the 8.02% (6.1 points) decline experienced in 2007.

What the 2008-09 data shows, however, is a slowdown in the decline of the average cost-value ratio across all projects to only 3.86%, just 2.7 points down from 2007.

For the entire report, visit Remodeling Magazine's website at www.costvsvalue.com.

Atlanta Area Report

Job Cost	Resale Value	Cost Recouped	Project
\$42,683	\$32,246	75.5%	Attic Bedroom
\$12,858	\$7,999	62.2%	Back-Up Power Generator
\$54,288	\$42,407	78.1%	Basement Remodel
\$33,959	\$22,450	66.1%	Bathroom Addition
\$14,510	\$10,953	75.5%	Bathroom Remodel
\$14,494	\$11,006	75.9%	Deck Addition (composite)
\$9,370	\$7,863	83.9%	Deck Addition (wood)
\$72,717	\$51,301	70.5%	Family Room Addition
\$52,710	\$36,960	70.1%	Garage Addition
\$26,465	\$14,905	56.3%	Home Office Remodel
\$53,236	\$42,104	79.1%	Major Kitchen Remodel
\$90,590	\$64,719	71.4%	Master Suite Addition
\$20,320	\$16,234	79.9%	Minor Kitchen Remodel
\$16,088	\$11,661	72.5%	Roofing Replacement
\$9,326	\$7,705	82.6%	Siding Replacement (vinyl)
\$67,670	\$42,920	63.4%	Sunroom Addition
\$131,717	\$102,338	77.7%	Two-Story Addition
\$9,496	\$7,535	79.4%	Window Replacement (vinyl)
\$10,416	\$8,215	78.9%	Window Replacement (wood)

Cutting Heating Costs?

With heating costs going through the roof, what are some suggestions to reduce heating bills?

Most homes waste energy in many different ways. The following is a list of some of the ways to reduce the heat loss:

1. Keep your furnace or heat pump filters clean. A dirty filter will restrict air flow and make the system work harder.
2. Have your furnace ductwork checked for leaks. Leaks in the ducts may well be one of the largest energy losses.
3. Turn your heating system's thermostat down to a cooler setting and wear a sweater.
4. Lower the thermostat before leaving or going to bed. A great way to do this automatically would be to install a programmable thermostat. This can even turn up the heat just before you get up in the mornings.
5. Check to verify your fireplace damper is closed. Heat from your house can be drawn out the chimney. Also, install glass doors across the opening.
6. Make sure your attic insulation is up to date. The current energy code requires a minimum of R-30 insulation. We recommend R-38.
7. Check all door weather-stripping to verify all doors seal against the weather-stripping and along the threshold. Add storm doors where possible.
8. Check all windows. Single pane windows are known to leak air. Adding storm windows will be a great help. Check the weather-stripping on insulated glass windows.
9. Attic pull-down stairs are also a large source of air leaks. Add weather-stripping around the door and add an insulated cover over the stairs.
10. Install an insulated wrap around the water heater and lower the water temperature...however, not below 140 degrees.
11. If you have an electric water heater, you can install a timer to turn it off when not in use and back on before you get up in the morning or get home from work.
12. Insulate all hot water piping in unfinished basement ceilings and in crawl spaces.
13. Make sure your dryer vent pipe is clean. The dryer will use less energy.
14. Clean your refrigerator coils with a vacuum cleaner. Coils are located either on the back or underneath.
15. Use the dishwasher only when you have a full load. Also, let the dishes air dry instead of using the heated dry.
16. Cover all whole house fans and window boxed fans when not in use.
17. Use your ceiling fans in reverse to push the heat down from the ceilings.
18. Use space heaters to heat around you instead of heating the entire house.
19. Replace all light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.

Fixing Cracks In Concrete?

What is the best way to seal hairline cracks in a concrete driveway? The products at Lowe's and Home Depot are too thick, and I'm concerned that the cracks will get worst during the winter months.

Bill Palmer, former editor of Concrete Construction magazine and president of Complete Construction Consultants, responds: Cracks seldom degrade from freeze-thaw action since water within them isn't confined and therefore can't cause damage when it freezes. In addition, most "hairline" cracks are surface cracks. They don't go all the way through the slab, so water can't degrade the subbase. For cracks less than .04 inch wide



(about the thickness of a paper clip wire), the aggregate interlock will prevent any differential movement across them, and repair is unnecessary. So if these truly are hairline cracks, the best approach is probably to do nothing. Whatever crack repair technique you use will probably look worse than the crack.

Even a crack wide enough to allow water all the way through the slab shouldn't cause any damage if there's a well-compacted and well-drained subbase. Without that, uneven settlement could occur around the crack. But keep in mind that cracks this size are active – they widen in cold weather and narrow in warm weather – so any sealant must have enough elasticity to handle the movement.

Source: Journal of Light Construction – January 2008

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Quote Of The Month

"MATURITY IS THE ABILITY TO DO
A JOB WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE
SUPERVISED, TO CARRY MONEY
WITHOUT SPENDING IT AND TO
BEAR AN INJUSTICE WITHOUT
WANTING TO GET EVEN."

ANN LANDERS

A Tip Of The Hat To:

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