

# C02 Consumer guide:

Preparing for and managing your installation

# Preparing for and managing your installation

## Introduction

This guide is for consumers preparing for the start of their installation project and managing the process throughout the planned work.

This guide covers the following areas:

- Preparing for installation
- Relationship tips and living with tradespeople
- What is a variation order and why are they important?
- Installation standards
- What to realistically expect
- Managing minor concerns
- Installation completion
- What is snagging and is this normal?
- Complaints and disputes

## Further information

More useful information can be found on the BiKBBi website –[www.bikbbi.org.uk](http://www.bikbbi.org.uk) or by writing to:

The British Institute of Kitchen, Bedroom & Bathroom Installation  
Thames Enterprise Centre  
Princess Margaret Road  
Essex  
RM18 8RH

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## Preparing for installation

Now that you have appointed your installer and you have agreed the scope of work, the countdown for the start date has started. Now is the time to start thinking about the arrival of your installer and begin preparing for the inevitable upheaval that is associated with most home improvement projects.

**Kitchen installations:** A kitchen installation usually takes around one week, depending on the complexity of the product and the type/amount of preparatory work needed before the install. In advance of works commencing, you may want to think about:

- Where you will store your kitchen contents and equipment
- Whether you can set up a makeshift kitchen elsewhere in the house
- Organising eating and drinking provisions during the installation

**Bedroom installations:** Bedroom installations are usually far quicker from start to finish. A typical fitted bedroom, even with complex products, usually takes between 1-2 days. That said, the bedroom is an important place, so planning is crucial. You should think about:

- How and where you will store your personal items, particularly items you may need to access during the project, such as clothes.
- Where you will sleep if you don't have a spare bedroom? You may need to hang on to items you are planning to let go, including bed frame and mattress, to create a makeshift bedroom in another area of the property.

**Bathroom installations:** Bathroom installations are possibly the most difficult for residents that will continue to live in the property during the works, especially if you live in a property that has only one bathroom. It is important to you discuss your install with your installer, who should be able to give you a guide to when you might have a functioning bathroom (toilet and basin at the very least) which you can plan around. You could be without the use of a bathroom for a few days depending on the nature of the project. You should consider:

- Whether you can ask a friendly neighbour to help out
- Perhaps you can arrange for a port-a-loo to be in-situ during the works
- Family and friends close by are usually a good solution for showering/bathing
- Failing that, perhaps it might be worth checking in to a hotel for a night or two

Other things to consider ahead of your installation project:

Are there vulnerable occupants living in the property? If there are young, elderly or those with special needs likely to be affected by the install, will be present whilst works are being carried out or not? You should always make your installer aware in advance and discuss any special measures they may need to take.

Don't forget the neighbours! Even the friendliest of neighbours can be put out if they are not made aware of any works that may cause disruption. Make them aware of the planned works and provide them with the dates. You never know, they might offer the use of their facilities.

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## Waste management

Home improvements can create a lot of waste. Ahead of your installation, you should discuss waste management with your installer. Who is responsible for removing waste? how will it be removed? Remember, there are laws about the different types of waste and how they can be disposed of. It is your responsibility to ensure that your waste is being handled correctly. Also, think about recycling where possible. Appliances and kitchen units can easily be offered to recycling centres and may even have a value.

## Relationship tips and living with tradespeople

Home improvement can be stressful. Your personal space will soon become what will feel like a building site, with unfamiliar people and inevitable disruption to your normal way of life.

So, it's incredibly important to think about the day-to-day relationship you'll soon be having. Careful, pre-emptive thought into some fairly basic topics will make all the difference.

Think about the following provisions and have the conversation before work starts:

- Hours of working – agree start and finish times.
- Who will be working within your home? Get to know the individuals.
- Will toilet and washroom facilities be provided?
- What areas are accessible for tradespeople and importantly, what areas are not?
- Point out local amenities – Is there a place for coffee or lunch nearby? If there's nothing local, agree where tradespeople can rest during the day.
- What protection is provided to flooring, ingress and egress to your home?

Having these practical discussion beforehand will prevent expectational disappointment on both sides.

Remember, whilst it's your home – it is their workplace. Mutual respect is advised to assist a happy and harmonious home (and workplace).

You'll need to have a positive working relationship, especially if you plan on being at home when the tradespeople are working. But, do not make the mistake of micro-managing. There's nothing more distracting than the watchful eyes of keen homeowners when the installer is simply wanting to get on with their work.

Agree periodic updates on progress, be that at the start or end of the working day.

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## Variation orders and why they are important

There will be a number of reasons why the scope of work may change, after the initial agreement, before or even more typically, after the installation starts. These changes are called 'variations' and it is incredibly important that they are documented and agreed in advance.

As an example, once the room is emptied and the new furniture is being installed, it may be necessary or preferable to amend the layout. But, remember your agreement is to 'fit to the plan' and therefore any amendments, unless agreed in writing, may be viewed as a breach of that agreement.

To avoid such breaches, the introduction of a simple variation order is necessary.

BiKBBi registered businesses have access to free variation order templates, but any such order should:

- Be agreed by both parties before the variation is undertaken.
- Be a written and signed (by both parties) list of the required/requested changes.
- Include any changes to the price (up or down) and associated payment terms.

Even though the easiest option would be a verbal agreement, ensure even the smallest amendment is protected by a variation order. This document is there to protect both parties via a clear agreement to change from the original plan.

One final tip when it comes to changes. The value of tradespeople and their experience, expertise and time should be respected at all times. It is unreasonable and unfair to expect additional works to be undertaken just because they are there. They are not obliged to undertake additional work without additional charge.

## Installation standards

As a consumer, you have legal rights known as Statutory Rights. In addition to these Statutory Rights, there will be standards relating to conduct and the installation of products.

BiKBBi registered businesses agree to working within the parameters of both Statutory Rights (as a service provider) and those standards relating to conduct and products.

Details of these standards can be found on our website - [www.bikbbi.org.uk](http://www.bikbbi.org.uk)

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In relation to your Statutory Rights:

The service must be carried out with reasonable care and skill:

This means that the trader must, as a minimum, work to the same standard as any reasonably competent person in that trade or profession. The law does not imply that any particular result will be achieved, but many contracts will have express terms as to what result the customer can expect from the service. To minimise the risk of disagreement, it is advisable to state clearly where a particular result has been agreed and where there is a risk of the desired result not being achieved.

Information said or written to the consumer is binding where the consumer relies on it:

This will include quotations and any promises about timescales or the results to be achieved. This applies if the consumer takes account of this information in deciding whether to buy the service or to make any decision about the service subsequently.

The cost of the service must be reasonable:

A contract will often specify a price, or it will be clear about how the price will be calculated (for example, an hourly rate). Where the price is not agreed beforehand, the price must be reasonable. Typically, this will be judged against the prices that other similar traders might have charged.

The service must be carried out within a reasonable time:

Often, a contract will specify a date or time for the service to be performed or completed. Where there is no agreement about time, the timescale must nevertheless be reasonable. What is reasonable depends on the type of service and all other relevant circumstances.

**What to expect:**

Installations are complex, involve many factors – some of which are uncontrollable by the installer. Rarely do installation projects run exactly to plan and the secret to success is knowing that, but more importantly how both parties react to it.

There will be noise, dust, disruption to your normal life and living at home during an installation, for many, is a challenging time. It is no wonder why some homeowners choose not to be at home when these works are undertaken, but it is understandable why most don't have an option.

Projects do run over in terms of time. Unexpected costs may very well arise once the old product has been removed, revealing complexities that simply couldn't be forecast. So, it's important therefore that these things are considered and, in the event things don't quite go to plan, emotions are put to one side and focus is placed on resolving whatever challenge is presented.

Working with your installer makes far more sense than working against them. You both have a common goal of the completion of a successful project in a timely and professional manner.

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## Managing minor concerns

One of our most important tips would be that the installation should only be judged on completion. Often, we hear of premature complaints early on in the project, when the work is not complete.

Without doubt, the majority of the project will be in the preparation, with perhaps only the last day or two of installation when the room starts to resemble a space that you planned and hoped for.

However, there may be occasions when you spot something you are not quite satisfied with, and it would only be natural to raise your concern with the tradesperson.

We would recommend a brief or debrief, at the beginning or end of each working day. The purpose of such brief would be to discuss:

- Project progress reality versus the plan.
- Any variation and agreement of subsequent variation order.
- Areas of observation / concern.

Be mindful not to confuse minor areas of concern relayed via constructive feedback, with more serious complaints or disputes. Undoubtedly you will face challenges that will require honest dialogue, so creating a daily opportunity for you to routinely converse will support a healthy, two-way conversation. It would be a useful idea to concisely document any feedback in a site log, and for that log to be reviewed as part of the daily dialogue.

## Installation completion

On conclusion of the installation, you will either be in a position to 'sign-off' the work, or you will need to agree outstanding items and appropriate timescales to complete any areas of work that are not yet finished.

There may be several reasons why an installation cannot be fully completed at the end of a project slot, which could include the availability of missing or damaged products and challenges faced during the installation that subsequently elongated the project.

Most installers work to a tight schedule and have work booked back-to-back throughout the year. So, when unexpected challenges cause delay (and a subsequent need to return to complete), this can often be logistically difficult.

In the event the project cannot be completed for any of the aforementioned reasons, it is advisable to be reasonable and to arrange a return date for the installer to come back and complete. However, if this isn't reasonably possible, you may need to arrange for another installer to return and complete. We would always advise consumers to try and stick with the same installer, mainly due to their familiarity of the project, but also because it's usually the easiest option for both parties.

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Whether fully completed or not, it is advisable that at the end of the project, or that particular phase, that you and your installer go through an installation sign-off procedure.

The installer should leave your property clean, tidy and the room ready for use. This would constitute a 'builder's clean', which would consist of the removal of tools, dust and debris. Unused materials, waste from old products would be subject to a waste agreement, usually made at the beginning of the project.

The sign-off procedure is designed to be a formal closure of the service, or one that signifies the end of a phase of work. It is important to understand that this sign off does not affect your Statutory Rights and should a defect be found after sign-off, or an area of dissatisfaction be found, the sign-off will not interfere with the responsibilities of the installer or your right to a remedy.

You should not feel under any pressure with the sign-off procedure, instead use it as an opportunity to agree the way forward at that particular moment in time.

The sign-off procedure should include:

- A close look at the workmanship, to include furniture and small building works etc.
- A demonstration of appliances and a handover of instructions / appliance warranties.
- Location of service isolation valves / switches (electrical / gas and water).
- Removal of waste from site / agreement when this will occur (if applicable).
- Inspection of any damage to property.
- Confirmation that both parties agree to the current state of the installation and the service delivered to that point.
- Agreement, even if in principle, to outstanding works and the timeframe, even estimated, that the work will be completed.

The above should be confirmed in writing. BiKBBI registered businesses have access to template documents that aid the sign-off process.



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## What is 'snagging' and is it normal?

Snagging is the process of checking a new installation for defects, poor workmanship and more serious issues that would fail building regulations. Almost anything in an installation can be snagged during a snagging survey, usually agreed during the sign off process - or during daily briefings.

Snagging is entirely normal and should be expected with installations. In fact, it is very rare that an installation will complete without snagging, although in some cases these are resolved before the customer is involved.

Typical snagging items in kitchen, bedroom and bathroom installation would include:

- Cabinetry / furniture – things like customisation, door alignment, cover caps, hinges and runners.
- Pipework, plumbing and drainage.
- Tiling – both wall and floors.
- Levelling of wall and base units.
- Damage caused to products, regardless of cause – note: Unless otherwise agreed, damaged items should not be installed.

The most important thing to consider when snagging is that human workmanship is rarely perfect. There will always be a subjective view on whether something is satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Consideration on whether items are challenged or not should include whether there is an aesthetic impact, function of the product or service and longevity. If there are concerns over any of those points, then it should be added as an area of snagging and a discussion with your installer should be had.

In most instances, the rectification of snagging items is agreed, completed and the project signed off. However, if you're unsatisfied with the outcome, or proposed outcome, then this situation may escalate to complaint, or even a dispute.

## Complaints and disputes

See our Consumer Guide C03.