



Construction Projects in Puerto Rico: TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

PHASE ONE

In the first phase of your project, start with finding a qualified DACO certified general contractor. This step is of the utmost importance here in Puerto Rico simply because of the time it takes to find the right fit. The home remodel market is full of “Contractors” who are not licensed, insured, or qualified. It is quite common here for work to be done without the proper permits and insurance and it shows.

Many g.c.s will subcontract all the work and not do any supervision; they just collect checks and hire subs and will want more money to do any warranty work. DACO requires a 1-year warranty on all projects done by general contractors. There are cheaper contractors but remember cheap is not good and good isn't cheap. Going down the cheaper road also leaves you open to a lot of liability since you have uninsured workers working on your property. The DACO certification indicates that a contractor is insured and bonded which means your money is not at risk of being stolen or the project being done to subpar standards.

This is the time to decide how hands on you want your project to be. Do you want to manage the project and self-manage, or do you want to pass all the responsibilities, headaches, and liabilities on to a professional?

PHASE TWO

It is time to plan every detail of your project, if you have chosen a general contractor then you will have to have a clear and open line of communication. Changes mid project are never good. They increase the cost of the project to a higher degree than if they were part of the original plan and they can also create delays. So, get a good plan of action from the beginning and this project will go smoothly.

Depending on the extent of the project you may want to get the plan drawn up by an engineer or an architect, this will help with communication between you and the g.c., which is one of the most important aspects of having a successful project. Having an engineer or architect sign off on the plan will also ensure you are getting by the book, up to code quality work. Contrary to popular belief we do have building codes here in Puerto Rico and your project should adhere to them for your own benefit.

If you have chosen not to hire a general contractor and prefer to go the handy man route, you should still require them to carry insurance and ask for a certificate of insurance from their agent. You may be able to get the policy yourself just to be safe. I will not badmouth the handy man segment as it was a starting place for me here in Puerto Rico and there are some skilled handy men. I do say some. I would only hire a handy

man if I were someone with experience with construction projects and understands the processes of whichever aspect of a remodel you are doing.

Contracts are a must! Contracts are good things for everyone involved. Working with a general contractor who does not have contracts is a bad sign. You do not need a complicated contract to protect yourself. But consider the expense of having a local lawyer write up contracts for each of the aspects of a project will get expensive when dealing with multiple contractors or handymen. A general contractor would normally be taking on that overhead. By managing the project, yourself, it is now your expense.

PHASE THREE

This is the phase where the form and shape of your project starts to become reality. If you have hired a qualified DACO certified general contractor and made a thorough plan outlining every aspect of the job and set a rough timeline, this is where you get to sit back and have a few mojitos. At Aventyr PR LLC, we offer full service on-site supervision and inspections of all phases of your project. You will be given milestone-based updates and we are always available to our clients to discuss the project.

If you have decided on the cheaper route, prepare to be very hands-on and make sure your contract clearly defines the expected results and a realistic timeline (remember to be realistic and consider that every other day is a holiday here).

Things to be aware of if you are supervising the project on your own is getting to know the building codes for whatever work is being done. Everything has a code! You can research codes in the international building code directory. Second is to know your materials and how they are supposed to be applied. All materials are tested and have manufacturer or industry set standards. Not applying products correctly can result in loss of warranty.

For those of you in buildings with HOAs, you should also be clear with them about any improvements you are making. They have specific rules regarding construction work and when and how it is done. Deliveries and getting materials into your property may be a more complicated process. Old San Juan residents multiply complications by 10

PHASE FOUR

Finishing your project. This phase is the most gratifying part of the project. You can see the real world finished product in its entirety and it is time to make a punch list and finally have the place to yourself again. Punchlist phase should not take longer than 2 weeks depending on the scope of the project. Take your time and find anything that is not finished to an acceptable level so it can be corrected. A good option for larger projects if you do not have an eye for finding issues is to hire a second g.c. to do a final inspection of the project. If you have hired a g.c. I would suggest you walk through and identify anything that they have not already listed. Once the punch list is finished and final payment is made you still have 1 year of warranty if you hired a DACO certified contractor. If you hired a cheaper option expect the warranty to be done when final payment is made.

SUMMARY

- Hire qualified professionals or take your chances.
- Make a thorough plan with your contractor and any engineer or architect involved.
- Communicate clearly from the beginning to the end of the project. Especially where changes have been made or are wanted.
- We are always ready to discuss your project if you have any questions or need some advice.
- Enjoy your new place!

ABOUT US

Aventyr PR LLC has been doing business in Puerto Rico since 2020, we are DACO certified and in full compliance with all local contractor requirements. We have quality references available at your request. We specialize in home improvement projects of all kinds, call us at (763)999-0114 or email us at aventyrpr@gmail.com Check out our Facebook page www.facebook.com/aventyrpr We would be happy to discuss your project with you.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR CHECKLIST

- DACO certified
- Liability insurance
- Bond insurance
- Good Communication
- Great references

PROJECT CHECKLIST

- Know what you want and what your budget is (paint color/sheen, tile choices and locations etc.).
- Get drawings made of the existing structures and the planned changes for larger scope projects
- Interview the appropriate contractors and make a choice
- Stay in communication once project starts and identify any needed changes to the scope of work as early as possible.
- As work is finishing try to identify any punch list items ahead of time to save time and finish your project before the contractor moves on to the next project.
- Enjoy your finished product!