Fireplace Planning Checklist

Before you call anyone, start here. When we redid our 1990s fireplace, the most useful thing we did was get clear on what we wanted and what our wall actually measured. Use this page to plan, measure, and gather the questions for your pros. — Teresa

1 Our priorities

Must have	Would love	Can wait

- ☐ Center the fireplace
- ☐ Mirror above mantel
- ☐ More presence / height
- ☐ TV above mantel
- ☐ Built-in storage
- ☐ Better lighting
- ☐ Display shelves
- ☐ Bold paint moment

2 Measured sketch

Sketch the wall: recess, windows, ceiling slope, outlets, vents

Write every dimension on the sketch and note where you measured from.

3 Measurements

What you're measuring	Width	Height	Depth
Room / full wall			
Recess or alcove			
Existing unit / firebox opening			
Planned finished face / surround			
Planned mantel (shelf)			
Space above mantel			

Label units and orientation (W × H) on every number. The firebox, the finished face, and the overall wall are different measurements.

4 Existing unit: reuse or replace?

Make / model: _____

Manual located? _____

- ☐ Ask a fireplace professional whether the existing unit can be reused
- ☐ Ask what moving or raising it would involve
- ☐ Ask a venting specialist whether the venting can be rerouted for the new location
- ☐ Compare reuse vs. replace with your pro before you commit to a design

5 Ask your pro, for your unit

- ☐ Clearances to combustible materials (wood face, mantel, built-ins)
- ☐ Mantel height and depth allowed by the manufacturer
- ☐ Can a TV go above it? Heat above the opening vs. the TV maker's limits
- ☐ Permits and inspections required where we live
- ☐ Who handles each part: fireplace, venting, electrical, carpentry

6 Who we're calling

Pro	Name / company	Phone / email	Visit date	Notes
General contractor				
Fireplace / venting specialist				
Licensed electrician				
Carpenter / cabinetmaker				
Painter / flooring				

A quick safety note: This checklist is a planning aid, not installation instructions. Every fireplace has its own manufacturer requirements, and local rules vary. Have your fireplace's manual and a qualified local professional guide venting, clearances, mantel and TV placement, and permits.

Planning aid only, not installation guidance · For personal use

Details, Finishes & Budget

7 Electrical & lighting (with an electrician)

- [ ] Outlets needed: mantel, shelves, cabinets
- [ ] Recessed outlet box behind a possible TV
- [ ] Path for cables between TV and cabinet electronics
- [ ] Lighting above or inside shelves
- [ ] Switch locations

Notes: _____

8 Above the mantel: mirror or TV

- [ ] Plan the mantel and the wall above it together
- [ ] Mirror: check what it will reflect from across the room
- [ ] Mirror: plan secure hanging for its weight
- [ ] TV: confirm placement with your fireplace pro first
- [ ] Frame or bezel: match the exact TV model and size it lists

TV model / size: _____

Frame lists fit for: _____

9 Built-ins & storage

- [ ] Closed cabinets for: electronics / decor / _____
- [ ] Open shelves for: books / display / _____
- [ ] Match an existing finish (kitchen? trim?)
- [ ] Hardware style and placement
- [ ] Can the design work within the recess or framing limits?

10 Paint: sample it in the room

Surface	Color + code	Sheen
Fireplace face		
Fireplace wall		
Built-ins / trim		

- [ ] Look at samples in morning, afternoon, and evening light
- [ ] Check samples next to the floor and nearby finishes

11 Flooring & order of work

- [ ] Are floors changing too? Flooring type: _____
- [ ] Ask your contractor what order of work they recommend
- [ ] Plan dust and furniture protection

Our order of work: _____

12 Final questions for our contractor

- [ ] What's included in the quote, and what isn't?
- [ ] Which specialists will you bring in?
- [ ] Who pulls permits and schedules inspections?
- [ ] How will changes be priced and approved?
- [ ] What happens if you find surprises behind the wall?

13 Budget planner

Category	Estimate	Quote	Actual	Notes
Fireplace pro / venting				
Demo, framing & drywall				
Carpentry: face, mantel, built-ins				
Electrical & lighting				
Paint & finishing				
Flooring (if included)				
Hardware, mirror, TV & decor				
Permits & inspections				
Contingency (set your own %): _____				
Total				

Notes & inspiration

Planning aid only, not installation guidance. Follow your manufacturer, local requirements, and qualified pros.

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