

February 27, 2009

To whom it may concern:

As an ASID professional designer specializing in kitchens and baths, and residential design, I want to emphasize the importance of regulation in this field. I can not stress enough how much an interior designer affects the health, life safety and welfare of the client in their home, and most especially in the kitchen and bath.

There are many computer programs that will help a homeowner or minimally trained employee place cabinetry in a space. Many home centers (and the like) employ part-time people to layout a space. It was through my education and knowledge acquired through the NCIDQ exam preparations that I learned how to avoid certain safety and health hazards in designing a kitchen or bathroom.

Through programs on HGTV, and similar design stations on television and the internet, the public is more aware of options than ever before. I have been asked to re-create scenarios that my clients have seen through various media sources. In addition, I have been called on to correct safety issues that have been created through designs done by under educated people. Some of these situations include:

- Placement of a wall oven, which when opened, occupied the circulation path between the Family Room and the Powder Room. The hot items needed to be transferred across this corridor, creating safety concerns especially with small children and pets crossing this path.
- A cooktop was placed on an eating peninsula with a single level countertop. When one was reading a newspaper while the cooktop was in use, a fire hazard was created. By raising the countertop at eating area by six inches, creating two-levels, a barrier was formed between the cooktop and the reading material, thus removing the fire hazard.
- Another client saw a marble countertop installed in a food prep area on a television show and wanted the same in her kitchen, unaware that marble is a porous surface which will transmit bacteria. I was able to recommend other antimicrobial options which will help her keep her family's food safe.
- An elderly client's family was concerned because she was constantly dropping and breaking items she thought she was placing on the countertop. Because of my NCIDQ training, I was able to understand that she was having trouble differentiating between the edge of the countertop and the floor. She now has a countertop which is contrasting in color to the floor, creating a visible edge and no longer has that issue.

- For another client, in their Master Bathroom, I was asked to specify a wall mount shower head, a rain head, and six body sprays because they saw it on television. I knew to check the water pressure to determine if enough water could be delivered to supply this faucetry. It was determined that this was not possible. Without my knowledge and expertise, the items would have purchased and installed, which could not perform in a way that would meet the client's expectations.

Unfortunately, the general public is not aware of the difference between "Susie Homeowner" with a flair for decorating, and a professionally trained and educated interior designer. Those that would never hire any professional that hadn't passed the qualifying exam don't know enough to ask for an interior designer with similar qualifications. The public needs to be educated and protected.

While working with clients in their homes, a trusting relationship ensues. When the project is completed in a kitchen or bathroom, I am often asked to assist them with other areas of their home. With the knowledge from my education, the NCIDQ courses and examination, I have learned how to avoid other health and life safety issues, not just in the home, but in public areas as well. I become very uncomfortable when I think about the number of people that are assisted by those that don't have knowledge of local building codes, fire retardant fabrics, tripping hazards, etc. Please help us regulate this profession so that the unsuspecting public doesn't have to continue to learn the hard way.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cyndi Haaz, ASID

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