



CITY OF BOSTON
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GREEN OPTIONS: CABINETS

green your home



BOSTON GREEN
BUILDING

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New cabinetry can be the most expensive component in a kitchen or bathroom remodel. First, determine whether your cabinets need to be replaced, resurfaced, or simply repainted.

If space is the issue, there are ways to maximize what you already have. Increase storage by adding shelves within the cabinets, or changing doors to drawers under counters. Pullout shelves can be added that allow you to retain the existing cabinet doors.

Existing cabinets can be completely transformed and updated with cabinet refacing— replacing the cabinet and drawer fronts while keeping the base cabinetry. By refacing them, you could end up with a premium-quality kitchen that looks brand new—at a fraction of the monetary and environmental cost. Find companies that specialize in this process under Cabinet Refacing in the phone directory or online.

Whether refacing your cabinets or installing new ones, be careful with cabinetry constructed of particleboard or conventional medium density fiberboard (MDF). Not only can it fall apart if wet, it often contains urea formaldehyde, which can emit irritating and unhealthy fumes for decades after it's installed and must be disposed of hazardous waste.

Environment and health friendly alternatives include:

- Formaldehyde-free MDF made with exterior-grade resins for added durability.
- Agricultural fiber panels (called wheatboard or strawboard) are free of formaldehyde binders. They are an excellent option in dry and protected areas, and make use of an underutilized resource: plant stems left over from grain production. Applying veneers or finishes increases the durability of wheatboard.
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) (www.fscus.org) certified exterior-grade plywood. The Forest Stewardship Council sets standards to certify forest products from responsibly managed forests.

Check our web site for updated information.