

**Typically 3-5
Days**

PE-stamped wall-removal plans, fixed-fee
quote typically within one business day

The Reno Homeowner's Open- Concept Remodel Prep Kit

Everything You Need Before Removing a Wall — From "Is It Load-Bearing?" Through Passed Inspection

Fixed-fee wall-removal plans. PE-stamped and permit-ready. One email to get started.

By Palisade Engineering — Structural Engineers (PE-SE)



INSIDE THIS GUIDE

What You'll Learn

This guide gives you everything you need to plan a wall removal the right way — to help avoid surprises, mid-build discoveries, and failed inspections.

1

The 8-Item Checklist: What to Gather Before You Call

Eight items your structural engineer needs to quote and start work. Have these ready and you'll typically get a quote within one business day.

2

5 Mistakes That Turn a Simple Wall Removal Into an Expensive Headache

Real mistakes we see regularly on Reno remodels — including the lateral bracing issue that Washoe County catches every time.

3

What It Costs and How Long It Takes

Honest fee ranges and turnaround times for the Reno/Sparks area. Plus what you'll get back — stamped calcs, structural plans, and a permit-ready package.

4

How to Get Started: 3 Photos and Your Address

Send photos of the wall (both sides) and one of the attic or crawlspace. We'll give you an initial assessment and a fixed-fee quote, typically within one business day.

Everything in this guide is useful whether you hire PE-SE or not — but with fixed-fee quotes and typical 3–5 day turnaround, we think you'll want to.



MEET YOUR ENGINEERS

A Note from Paul & Joel



Typically 3–5 Days

PE-stamped wall-removal plans, fixed-fee quote typically within one business day

We built this guide because of a conversation we have almost every week. A homeowner calls and says, "My contractor told me I need an engineer — what does that mean, what does it cost, and how long will it take?" They've got a kitchen they want to open up, a quote from a GC that mentions "structural," and zero idea what comes next.

We've engineered hundreds of wall removals across Reno and Sparks — Somersett, Caughlin Ranch, Arrowcreek, Damonte Ranch, you name it. What we've learned is that the engineering is almost never the problem. The delays come from not knowing what to expect, not having the right information ready, or hiring an engineer who doesn't understand Nevada's seismic requirements.

Inside you'll find how to tell if your wall is load-bearing, a checklist of what to gather before calling an engineer, the five mistakes that cause the most expensive delays, and what to expect for cost and timeline. Everything here is useful whether you hire PE-SE or not — but we think you'll want to.

Not sure where to start? Send us 3 photos and your address — we'll give you an initial assessment quickly.

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YOUR CHECKLIST

What to Gather Before You Call a Structural Engineer

Pull this together before you reach out. Every item you have ready eliminates a round of back-and-forth — and gets you a faster, more accurate quote.

Photos of the wall (both sides)
Show the full wall and where it meets the ceiling. Include attic or crawlspace photos if accessible.

Photos of the area above and below
Attic photos showing joist/truss direction above the wall.
Crawlspace photos showing what's under it.

Rough measurements
Wall length and ceiling height. A tape measure and rough sketch is plenty. Include opening size desired.

Your project address
We pull site-specific seismic parameters from USGS and look up original plans on file with Washoe County.

Year your home was built
Pre-1997 homes were designed to lower seismic standards. This affects whether lateral bracing must be addressed.

A description of what you want
Full removal, partial, pass-through, kitchen island — a rough sketch or Pinterest photo helps.

Any existing house plans
Original blueprints or plans from a previous remodel. Not required — we can work from photos.

Your contractor's contact info
If you've selected a GC, we'll coordinate directly on beam sizes, post locations, and field questions.



QUICK START: Put all of this in a single email with photos attached. One email, one reply with a quote. That's how this should work.
paul@pe-se.com



AVOID THESE MISTAKES

5 Mistakes That Turn a Simple Wall Removal Into an Expensive Headache

We've seen hundreds of wall-removal projects across Reno. These are the mistakes that cost homeowners the most time and money — and every one is avoidable.

1**Starting demolition before getting a permit.**

A homeowner or contractor gets excited, swings a sledgehammer, then discovers they need engineering and a permit. Now you're facing a stop-work order, fines, and an engineer designing around partially demolished framing.

2**Ignoring the lateral bracing issue.**

Reno sits in Seismic Design Category D. A load-bearing wall may also be a shear wall providing earthquake resistance. Removing it without addressing lateral bracing is a code violation. Washoe County catches it every time.

3**Not checking the foundation under the new posts.**

When you replace a wall with a beam, all the weight concentrates at two post locations. If your footing can't handle the new point load, discovering it mid-build adds thousands and weeks of delay.

4**Submitting an incomplete package to Washoe County.**

Washoe County's structural submittal checklist requires zero "No" boxes. Missing items trigger rejection and revision review. A complete package from a local engineer is designed to pass the first time.

5**Using pre-2024 structural details.**

As of January 1, 2026, all submittals must comply with 2024 building codes. Plans referencing the old code get sent back. Make sure your engineer is current on ASCE 7-22 seismic provisions.

Every one of these mistakes starts the same way: not knowing what to expect before the project begins. The checklist on the previous page is designed to prevent all five.



TURNAROUND & DELIVERABLES

What It Costs and How Long It Takes

Honest ranges for the Reno/Sparks area. All quotes are fixed-fee — no hourly billing, no surprises.

SCOPE	TYPICAL TURNAROUND	WHAT TO EXPECT
Single wall removal (straightforward span, simple load path)	3–5 business days	Fixed-fee quote typically within one business day
Wall removal with foundation work or complex load path	5–10 business days	Includes lateral analysis + foundation check
Multiple walls or whole-floor remodel package	10–14 business days	Full structural package for permit
Rush service	As fast as 48 hours	Available — ask us

The pattern is simple: complete info = fast turnaround. Incomplete info = back-and-forth that adds days.

FOR CONTEXT A straightforward single-wall removal typically runs \$4,000–\$6,000 all-in (engineering + construction + permit). The engineering is usually the smallest part — and it's the part that helps prevent the expensive surprises.

What You'll Get Back



PE-stamped structural calculations

Beam size, post sizes, and connection forces — designed to current 2024 code with site-specific seismic parameters for your address.



Structural plan sheet

Beam and post locations, connection details, and dimensions your contractor can build from. No ambiguity.



Foundation details

Whether your existing footing is adequate or needs reinforcement — and exactly what's required if so.



Lateral analysis

Confirms your home still meets earthquake resistance requirements after the wall is removed. The item Washoe County checks first in SDC D.



Permit-ready package

Formatted for electronic submittal through the Washoe County OneNV portal. Addresses every item on the county's structural checklist.



NEXT STEPS

Send Us 3 Photos and Your Address. That's It.

1 Email us photos of the wall and your address

paul@pe-se.com — photos of the wall (both sides) and one of the attic or crawlspace above/below.

2 Get an initial assessment and fixed-fee quote, typically within one business day

We'll tell you if it's load-bearing and what the engineering will cost. No hourly billing, no surprises.

3 Receive stamped plans — typical turnaround 3–5 business days

Permit-ready package designed to address Washoe County's structural checklist.

Our packages typically include site-specific seismic parameters, lateral analysis, foundation verification, and a complete structural plan sheet — the items Washoe County plan reviewers check first.

We take on a limited number of residential projects each month to maintain the turnaround our clients expect. If your remodel has a timeline, reach out early.

Licensed in: CA, NV, UT (active) | TX, VA, AZ, OR, WA (pending)



Scan to book a free
15-minute consultation

Three ways to reach us:

Email: paul@pe-se.com

Phone: (775) 323-6633

Reply: If you received this PDF by email, reply directly — it comes straight to us

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Disclaimer: This guide provides general information about load-bearing wall removal and the structural engineering process for residential remodels in Northern Nevada. It is not project-specific engineering advice. Actual requirements depend on your home's specific construction, site conditions, and the applicable authority having jurisdiction. Always consult a licensed structural engineer for advice specific to your project.

Planning a wall removal? Get a fixed-fee quote, typically within one business day — (775) 323-6633



Book a Call

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