



We have created this checklist for you to go through as well as a list of questions to ask your potential contractor before moving forward with any home renovation. We hope that this is a helpful resource and you use it as a guide in the decision making process when hiring a contractor. Please note this is just our recommendation.

Asking family or friends for referral recommendations.

Chances are that you know someone that has recently done a similar project that you are looking to have done. Whether it's a friend, neighbor, or close family member, asking for a referral (or asking who to avoid) from a trusted source can help guide you in the direction of choosing a contractor. Think about those close to you and ask them about their experience.

Ask to see examples of projects completed by your contractor.

As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words. You'll be able to get a good idea of your contractor's workmanship and design from photos of previous projects. Even better, ask your contractor if you can visit a jobsite and see their work first hand.

Ask for the phone numbers or email address of one or two of your contractor's previous clients.

One or more of your contractor's previous clients should be willing to give an unvarnished view of the work that they had completed. Were they happy or not? You can't expect every customer to want to have their personal contact information handed out, but they should at least have one or two customers available that you can contact and ask them about their experience.

Conduct an internet search.

Type the name of your potential contractor or the owner into a search engine and see what turns up. Take the time to actually read the reviews and make sure they make sense and are actual legitimate reviews. Unfortunately some companies will do anything it takes to appear better than they actually are and even go as far as to purchase scam reviews. This gives clients an impression that they are a good company to do business with, until you dig a little deeper and uncover the truth.

Check their website

Do they have a website? Is it professional looking? A good contractor should have a professional looking website complete with resources to help you in your decision making. It should be clear exactly who the company is and what their mission is. It should also have job photos and make it clear how to get in contact with them.

Ask questions.

You wouldn't hire someone for a job without first conducting an interview. Hiring a contractor to work for you should be no different! There are a number of questions you should answer before your project begins: What time of day and what days of the week will workers be on site; will subcontractors be used; who will be the point of contact during the project? Will a building permit be required per local municipality for any aspect of the job? Who is in charge of filing that permit? Any reputable contractor will be able to provide any answers to these and really any other question you may have. Below is a list of good background questions to ask your potential contractor.

Get a detailed quote.

A quote should be more than just a price. It should specify materials that will be used, length of time for completion of the job, and scope of the work. Make sure you have a clear understanding of what is included and what is not. Many times certain aspects of the job may not be included and could result in hidden expenses down the road.

Ask to see required licenses.

You don't want electrical work to be completed by a carpenter, and vice-versa. Make sure the workers are appropriately certified for the job at hand. You can ask your contractor for the builders license (or any other license number) and go onto LARA website to do a license verification.

Ask to see proof of liability insurance.

If there is an accident in your home, or damage to your home, who is liable? Make certain that your contractor is covered. You should always be able to request a copy of their insurance to make sure they are sufficiently covered to do the job.

Ask to see proof of municipal building permits.

Every jurisdiction has different rules regarding building permits. Make sure your contractor knows if one needs to be filed, and if so, that they are properly qualified to do so.

Ask to see a written contract.

Before you sign any contract, make sure the following items are described:

- a. Materials that will be used
- b. A statement that your contractor will pay any subcontractor
- c. A detailed description of the scope of work to be performed
- d. A dispute resolution process
- e. A payment schedule
- f. Applicable guarantees on both workmanship and materials

Below are some examples of questions to ask any contractor before hiring them. These are meant to be used as examples and not strictly conducted as an interview. You of course should also take into consideration if you genuinely feel good about working with them and how you feel about other jobs they have done or the style of work they typically do.

1. How long have you been doing this type of work and what kind of experience do you have with this kind of project?
2. Have you worked for other companies before setting out on your own?
3. Are you licensed? Do you belong to any professional associations? Does any aspect of my job require this type of licensing?
4. Do you have examples of your work?
5. Can we contact your previous clients?
6. What time will you begin work each day and when will you end the workday?
7. Who will be on-site? Do you use sub-contractors?
8. Will dust be an issue?
9. Will you use any type of protective barriers for ground protection?
10. Will you perform cleanup after each workday and at the end of the project? Who will dispose of unwanted materials?
11. Are building permits required for the project and will you apply for them?
12. Do you have insurance?
13. Will you provide a design for an additional cost or site plan so I can visualize the changes being made?
14. Is all your work performed according to building code?
15. Do you provide detailed contracts?
16. Who will be my point of contact throughout the job? What is their preferred method of communication during the work day? Text? Telephone? Email? In-person?
17. Will you provide daily updates?
18. How and when will you provide notice of changes to the project?
19. What happens if you find something unexpected?
20. What forms of payment are accepted towards invoices? Do you charge a convenience fee for card payments?
21. Do you provide a written estimate? If so, will the final price vary from the estimated price?
22. Is your work guaranteed?
23. Do you provide support after the project is finished?
24. What is the payment schedule and what method of payment do you prefer?
25. Can the price change once the contract has been signed and work has begun?