



What should you look for in a contractor?

Look for a contractor with a strong track record of success in your community. These businesses will be well established, they will be known in and by members of the community.

- Check their state contractor's license**
Is the contractor properly licensed? Check with your [California State License Board](#). In California, any job that costs \$300 or more for material and labor must be performed by a contractor who holds a current, valid license from the Contractors State License Board in the specialty for which he or she is contracting. Make sure the company is licensed to do the specific kind of work you want done.
- Check the BBB**
The Better Business Bureau has a track record of local businesses and a strict code of ethics or standards for our trade. Check to see if there are complaints or problems about the contractor. You can search the [BBB](#) to get a reliability report.
- Location**
Do they have a physical location? Is it staffed? The idea is to use that information to gain some perspective on the professionalism and stability of the company. A contractor who operates a business out of the back of a pickup truck with a cellular telephone may be difficult to find to complete a job or fix something that has gone wrong after the last bill is paid.
- How long have they been in business**
Look for a business that has been around 10 years or longer with the same name.
- Insurance (Workman's Compensation and General Liability)**
Workman's Compensation is necessary when the contractor is bringing in additional labor. General Liability insurance should be provided by all contractors. Be sure to check the actual certificate.
- Samples of work and references or referrals**
Ask the contractor for local references, and call them to see if they were satisfied with the contractor's work. Skilled contractors will be proud to take credit for their work. If possible, go out and look at finished projects. Some consumers even try to find jobs in progress to see how the contractor works and to speak with the homeowner about work habits, inconveniences, and the sensitivity of the contractor to the living needs of the homeowner. Remember that the person you hire to work in your home will be a part of your home until the job is completed.
- Interview**
Personally meet with the contractor; review your list of questions. How is the communications going?

Before selecting a contractor is it very important to clearly define your requirements (the Scope of Work).

And, remember that you often get what you pay for. You are about to make an investment in what is probably your greatest single asset — your home. Ask the contractor to explain the building codes for your neighborhood. In discussing quality with a potential contractor, be sure to discuss materials and work quality. Will this contractor use low-grade or mid-grade materials? What difference will that make in the quality of the completed work?

When you compare the prices of various contractors, be certain that you are comparing like quality of materials and work. Make notes as you interview each contractor and be sure to get from each a written estimate.

Bear in mind that a good, reputable contractor will expect these and other questions about quality, capability and experience. The right contractor for the job will be more than happy to answer questions and explain differences in materials and workmanship. In fact, this may be the first important test of whether the contractor is someone you can work with on the project design and implementation.

With a little research, some good conversations, and a willingness to trust your instincts, you can find the right contractor for your project and have a good experience with your remodeling job.