

TIPS FOR HIRING A CONTRACTOR.

MOST HOMEOWNERS WILL EXPERIENCE THE NEED TO HIRE A CONTRACTOR.

This could be an unplanned event, such as needing to hire a contractor quickly to make repairs after damage is done by a broken pipe or fallen tree. Or this could be the culmination of a years' planning to transform your dated kitchen into a gourmet cook's dream, or to enlarge your cramped bedroom into a luxurious master suite. Whatever the situation may be, hiring a contractor to make repairs or improvements to your home is not a decision to take lightly. Below are some tips and suggestions to help you make good decisions when hiring a contractor.

1. IS THE CONTRACTOR LICENSED, BONDED, AND INSURED?

You can verify this by calling the State of Washington's Department of Labor and Industries at 1-(800) 647-0982 or visit the L&I website at www.lni.wa.gov. Ask if there have been any complaints about the contractor, and if any, their status.

2. DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS.

Good communication with your contractor is vital to a successful project, as it helps clarify exactly what you want done. Get the answers that satisfy your needs; after all it is your home!

- Are they a local company?
- How long have they been in business?
- What types of work are they licensed to do?
- To what local trade associations do they belong?
- How many jobs have they done similar to yours?
- Have they done work before that requires a permit?
- Who are their materials supplier references?

3. DOES THE CONTRACTOR POSSESS A GOOD REPUTATION AMONG CUSTOMERS AND INDUSTRY PEERS?

Ask the contractor to share names and numbers of customers. Check references thoroughly. Visit past work done by your contractor, and ask the homeowners for their opinions on the work done.

4. EXAMINE YOUR BIDS CAREFULLY.

Bids that are noticeably lower than all others should be questioned. The difference may be in the quality of the materials used, experience of the crew doing the actual work, something is missing on the bid requirements, or it can be an indication that the contractor is not covering all the legitimate business costs. Don't automatically disregard a high or low bid, ask questions!

5. OBTAIN A WRITTEN CONTRACT.

Be sure that it includes price, payment terms, sales tax, permit fees (if applicable), the specific work to be performed, materials to be used, warranties, and payment schedules. It is also a good idea to include change-order processes, final review, sign-off procedures, and cleanup. Put all change-orders in writing and ask questions as work progresses. Avoid verbal contracts, and be very cautious about paying for incomplete work.



6. PERMITS ARE FOR YOUR PROTECTION!

Make sure permits are in place and inspections are made as the work progresses. Make sure the name of your contractor appears on the permit.

7. DOES THE CONTRACTOR OFFER A WARRANTY?

If so, what kind, and for how long? Be sure you understand what is covered under the warranty and what isn't.

8. IS THE CONTRACTOR A MEMBER OF OLYMPIA MASTER BUILDERS?

The Olympia Master Builders (OMB) is a professional trade association representing member companies. OMB helps educate members on new products, construction techniques, business practices, and industry issues.

If you need a contractor, check out the product and service listing starting on page 12 of this Buyer's Guide, visit omb.org and download OMB Mobile in your app store.

Make sure a contractor is licensed, registered, bonded and insured prior to hiring.

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