

Choosing a Contractor Checklist

1. Find A Reliable Contractor

When you're ready to begin a home improvement project, finding a good contractor is key. Get at least three recommendations to choose someone who fits your needs well. Make sure to talk to the contractor you want to hire. Most experienced contractors will provide this information when you're seriously considering them, not just thinking about remodeling.

To determine the best professional fit for your project:

- Check out their website. Is it updated and professional-looking?
- Explore customer reviews. Are they mostly positive?
- Consider negative reviews and responses.
- Did they respond professionally?
- Were issues resolved in the end?
- Ask trusted sources (friends, family, and neighbors) for a referral.
- Contact your local Better Business Bureau.

2. Vet Potential Contractors

Ask direct, thoughtful questions to each potential contractor:

- How long have you been in business? What type of projects are your expertise?
- Can you provide proof of current insurance?
- Will any subcontractors be used during this project?
- Can you provide a list of references?
- Will this project require permitting?

What is the project milestone timeline? What is a realistic start and end date?

What is your project estimate?

How do you prefer to arrange a payment schedule?

3. Meet With Your Top Choices

Take notes, and organize their answers as follows:

Who will be responsible for obtaining all required building permits?

Who is responsible for purchasing the materials?

Will they clean up after the project?

Who manages warranty details and responsibility?

Who will dispose of the construction debris, and is there an associated charge?

Is their quote an estimate or a fixed price?

How are worst-case scenarios and/or surprise costs handled?

4. Take Note of These Warning Signs

If you notice any of these, seek another professional:

They don't provide and/or sign a written contract.

They won't commit to project or milestone dates.

They are not licensed.

They are not permitted for a particular job.

They do not have a physical business address.

5. Final Meeting: Payment, Contract, and Project Details

Before remodeling begins, complete the following:

- Reconfirm your initial quote.
- Agree upon a payment plan.
- Discuss handling of payment for surprise costs.
- Learn who is responsible for applying for rebates or tax credits.
- Create your contract.

Fixed point contract or time and materials contract.

- Keep a paper trail. Request copies of your contract, licensing, and insurance.