



Roofing and General Contractors
“Where Quality and Customer Service Come First”

20 Questions To Ask Before Hiring A General Contractor

Question #1: How long have you been working in this industry?

Answer Should Be: Long enough to accumulate at least ten to twenty references you can contact.

Why This Is Important: More experience does not always mean better service; however, a contractor who has been in the industry for several years is more likely to have a proven track record.

Question #2: Are you licensed?

Answer Should Be: Yes.

Why This Is Important: If you hire an unlicensed contractor who does half of the work and then skips out of town (leaving you with an unfinished product), then you are on your own when it comes to resolving the problem. If you hire someone who is licensed by the state, you will have backup when it comes to fighting this battle.

Question #3: Do you carry workman’s comp insurance for your employees?

Answer Should Be: Yes, for all employees and sub-contractors that will be on your property.

Why This Is Important: Joe Roofer falls from a ladder and breaks his neck while completing your project. Guess who could be held responsible for medical bills if he is uninsured? **YOU!** Since the last thing you need is to pay for someone else's back surgery, ensure the contractor covers all employees with insurance before they step foot in your home.

Question #4: Do you have insurance in case something in my home gets broken in the renovation and/or construction process?

Answer Should Be: Yes.

Why This Is Important: Accidents happen; and when they do, you don't want to be held financially responsible for repairing damage you didn't cause. The company entering your home should ensure if they break something, they will fix it and cover all of the costs to do so.

Question #5: Do you belong to any professional organizations and, if so, which ones?

Answer Should Be: Yes.

Why This Is Important: Joining an association for contractors is not mandatory, but it does show the commitment the contractor has to the job and the industry in general. Professional associations, which may be national, statewide, or even specific to the contractor's specialty, offer added training, networking and research materials to members in an effort to keep them up to date with practices.

Question #6: Can you provide a list of references I can contact?

Answer Should Be: Yes.

Why This Is Important: Checking references is one of the only methods for assuring the contractor you choose can get the job done. Not sure

what to ask the references once you have them? The National Association of the Remodeling Industry offers a fantastic list of questions you should ask previous clients before hiring a contractor.

Question #7: What is the projected timeline for this project?

Answer Should Be: A specific amount of time.

Why This Is Important: While unexpected problems might arise as walls are removed or structures are built, an experienced contractor should be able to give you a projected time for completion of the project. There are times when a project can't be properly estimated due to the suspicion of hidden damage or additional work behind existing walls or floors. In these cases, you should enter into a "time and materials" contract.

Question #8: Are you willing to sign a "time and materials" contract?

Answer Should Be: Yes.

Why This Is Important: Imagine this renovation project nightmare: an unexpected find that results in extra time, materials and labor fees to fix; a contractor who wants to charge twice your monthly mortgage per hour to repair the damage; and you, stuck with a project half-finished and paying twice as much as you should to get it completed. This does happen, so it is imperative homeowners understand prior to the start of the project what the fees will be if a contractor runs into unexpected fixes. A "times and materials" document states the labor rate and material markup of anything that might arise unexpectedly.

Question #9: How often do you finish a project in the anticipated time?

Answer Should Be: Most of the time.

Why This Is Important: Knowing how often projects get completed on time will tell you certain things about the potential contractor. Is the contractor overextended? If so, the project could be delayed. But a contractor might say "Most of the time!" , which is more accurate. What

can you do? Ask your references if the contractor finished on time and, if not, why.

Question #10: Will you be on site at all times to oversee progress of the job?

Answer Should Be: Yes.

Why This Is Important: The contractor you hire *is* the project manager and should be on site each day to oversee progress and ensure the work is being done according to the plan you agreed to in the beginning of the project. If a contractor does answer “No” to this question, you need to ask . . .

Question #11: How often will you stop by to check on the progress?

Answer Should Be: Daily.

Why This Is Important: Part of the general contractor’s quoted price is for project management . If the contractor is not on site daily, you need to ask . . .

Question #12: Who is the on-site project manager?

Answer Should Be: The specific name of a person who will be at your home on a daily basis.

Why This Is Important: You need to know who to contact should you discover things are not going as planned, making sure someone is tracking progress, and someone who can answer your questions. If you are not given the name of a person who will be the project manager, **don’t hire** them. If your contractor names another person to oversee the project, the next question you ask should be . . .

Question #13: Will you provide me with daily updates?

Answer Should Be: Yes.

Why This Is Important: As the homeowner, it is your right to know exactly what is always going on. Without daily updates, you will be out of the loop and may be caught off guard at some point during the project.

Question #14: Who pulls required permits for the job, you or me?

Answer Should Be: The contractor.

Why This Is Important: The contractor should pull the permits as they are the professionals that know what needs to be done.

Question #15: Will you write out a contract specifying what you will do, the anticipated time frame, line items for materials needed to complete the job, cost, time needed, a 'time and materials' contract should a project become more involved than first thought, and a termination clause?

Answer Should Be: Yes.

Why This Is Important: A contractor (or any professional) can offer you a diamond but deliver a stone; and there isn't anything you can do about it if the agreement isn't in writing. Request a written contract that includes the items listed above. Have the contractor sign and date the contract and keep a copy in your records. Beyond that, make sure you understand everything in the contract.

Question #16: Will you offer a guarantee on your work, and, if so, what is the guarantee?

Answer Should Be: Yes, and with a specific amount of time (six months, one year, lifetime, etc).

Why This Is Important: If you are willing to purchase a warranty on that gadget you probably will never use; you should only hire a contractor who can guarantee their work. Contractors can guarantee against two types of problems:

- Defective Materials
- Workmanship Problems

Your written guarantee should include clauses that state what the contractor will cover and for how long.

Question #17: What is the daily work schedule?

Answer Should Be: Specific hours: Examples include 9-5 with an hour from noon to one for lunch; specific days of the week: Examples include Monday through Friday.

Why This Is Important: If a contractor fails to give you a schedule, this probably means:

1. They're not organized enough to create one, which means
2. They won't be at your house on a regular basis, which means
3. You will not have any sense of organization in your daily life until the project has been completed, which could take forever without an organized schedule

A professional contractor will give you a daily schedule and will adhere to that schedule throughout the time it takes to complete the job.

Question #18: Have you been involved with any legal disputes following a previous job?

Answer Should Be: An honest one.

Why This Is Important: In a perfect world, the answer to this question would be no. But we know the world isn't perfect. If the contractor has been involved in a prior legal dispute you need to know. While the specifics behind the dispute may not be a deal breaker, the fact that a contractor isn't honest when asked this question should be.

Question #19: What is the payment schedule?

Answer Should Be: Depends on the company, but you should never pay the entire amount up front.

Why This Is Important: Different contractors may offer different options when it comes to payment and different options may work better for your situation. However, never pay for the work in its entirety prior to the job's completion and inspection. A fair down payment is fine, but consumers should establish a payment plan tied to progress and should hold back the final payment until the job is completed to the consumer's satisfaction.

Question #20: Will you agree to including a termination clause in the contract that we co-write?

Answer Should Be: Yes.

Why This Is Important: A termination clause is an agreement that allows either party, contractor OR homeowner, to get out of the contract on the terms both parties agreed to. If a homeowner stops paying the contractor, the contractor could terminate the contract and walk away without penalty. On the other hand, if a contractor doesn't show up for work, the homeowner could terminate the contract without penalty.

Want to take a guess as to what our answers are to these questions? You got it! **YES!!!** (except for question 18... the answer to that one is NO)

Home renovations can be equally as exciting and daunting. Ask these twenty questions to contractors you're considering for the job, and then hire the contractor who can provide the answers you want to hear.

If we can answer anymore questions that you may have, give us a call at 405-261-6666. We can also be reached by email at pitchperfect.mms@gmail.com.

We can't wait to earn your business and look forward to meeting with you!