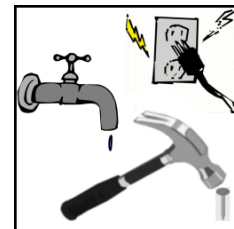


How to Hire *Any* Contractor

a.k.a. How to Avoid a Renovation Horror, Part I

www.RenovationHorror.com



Questions to Ask a Contractor's References

The contractor should be able to supply you with a minimum of four references. You should also ask for professional references from suppliers or subcontractors to verify sound business practices.

1. When did this contractor work for you?
2. What was the project?
3. Did they pull a permit? Was there a paper in your front window? Did any inspectors come to your home?
4. Could you communicate well with the contractor? Did he take the time to explain things?
5. Was he cooperative? Did he give you advice? In the end, was it *your* decision to make?
6. What methods did the contractor use to communicate with you? Phone? E-mail? Job log?
7. How long did it typically take him to return your calls/emails?
8. How were conflicts resolved? Were there any arguments or just disagreements?
9. Did the contractor keep communication going throughout the project?
10. How much was *this* person on-site?
11. Were you pleased with the quality of work?

*Because everyone defines "quality" differently, it is much better to **ask to see the completed work** to determine the level of quality for yourself. Don't be shy. If the client is proud of the results and liked dealing with the contractor, they are likely to invite you over. This will also weed out those who gave you personal friends to call as references.*

12. Were you informed of changes and extra costs *before* they were carried out? Were they put into writing beforehand? Were they fixed price or time & materials?
13. Was the job completed on schedule? Why not? *Some things are not in the control of contractors.*
14. Were the final details completed in a timely manner?
15. What were their normal working hours? Did that interfere with your day?
16. Was the work area organized & safe during the day? Did they clean up each night?
17. Were they polite? Did they always tell you the truth, even if it was embarrassing?
18. Did they treat the house like *their* work site or *your* home?
Were there cigarette butts and coffee cups everywhere? Swearing or loud music?
19. Were they considerate of neighbors? Did they notify abutters before work began?
20. Were you comfortable with the tradespeople that they subcontracted?
21. Did he or his subcontractors use unlicensed or uninsured workers? How do you know?
22. Would you recommend this contractor to your siblings or a close friend?

Pay attention to hesitations. (Most people don't like to say bad things about another person.)

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