

## Some Things to Consider Before You Hire a Contractor

**DO:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Plan your project carefully.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Shop around before hiring a contractor.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Get at least three written bids on your project.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Check with the Contractors State License Board to make sure the contractor is properly licensed, and to check the status and disciplinary history of the license.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Check out contractors with your local building department, trade associations or unions, consumer protection agency, and the Better Business Bureau.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Get references for previous projects the contractor has done, and follow up on them. Look at work and ask if the homeowners were satisfied with the results.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pay only 10 percent of the project price or \$1,000 as a down payment, whichever is less, and make sure your contract provides for a "retention."
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Make sure everything you and your contractor have agreed to is included in your contract, and don't sign anything until you understand and agree with all terms.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ask your contractor about inconveniences that may occur, and plan accordingly.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Keep a job file.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Take precautions to prevent mechanic's liens from being filed against your property and ask for lien releases from subcontractors and materials suppliers.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Make frequent inspections of the work, including a final walk-through.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If problems or disagreements occur, try first to negotiate with the contractor.

**Don't:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don't hire an unlicensed contractor.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don't hire a contractor without first shopping around.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don't act as an owner/builder, unless you are very experienced in construction.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don't sign anything until you completely understand it and agree to the terms.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don't make agreements with subcontractors or workers without consulting the prime

	contractor.
	Don't pay cash.
	Don't let your payments get ahead of the contractor's completed work.
	Don't hesitate to ask questions of the contractor.
	Don't make final payment until all phases of construction have been completed, inspected, approved and finalized by the City's Building Department.

**Be Sure Your Contract Includes:**

	The contractor's name, address, and license number and the name and registration number of any salesperson who solicited or negotiated the contract.
	The approximate dates (not number of working days) when the work will begin and be substantially completed.
	A description of the work to be done, a description of the materials and equipment to be used or installed, and the price for the work.
	A schedule of payments showing the amount of each payment in dollars and cents.
	If the payment schedule contained in the contract provides for a down payment, it shall not exceed \$1,000 or 10 percent of the contract price (excluding finance charges), whichever is less.
	A Notice to Owner regarding the state's lien laws, and the rights and responsibilities of an owner of property.
	Checklist for Homeowners and Information About Commercial General Liability Insurance.
	A description of what constitutes substantial commencement of work.
	A notice that the failure of the contractor, without lawful excuse, to substantially commence work within 20 days from the approximate date specified in the contract when work is to begin, is a violation of the Contractors License Law.

Source: California Contractors State License Board, <http://www.cslb.ca.gov/>