

Tips on Researching your Local Home Building Contractors

Getting ready for major repairs on your home can be stressful. Certain repairs are often necessary to keep your home in good working order such as: roofing, siding, flooring, and some are just necessary to make you comfortable in your home: refinishing or new kitchen cabinets and room additions. Whatever your reasons for getting home improvement work done the most important decision you will make is choosing your contractor.

The contractor is the orchestra leader for the entire project. They may perform some of the work themselves or none of it, rather hiring subcontractors who specialize in various pieces of the whole. The contractor's job is to bring all the pieces together to create a beautiful whole finished project.

How to Find a Contractor

Check your local phone book for contractors in your area and call them. Don't stop at the first on the list you want to get as many bids and interview as many as possible.

Talk to friends, family and neighbors. They are often your best source of information regarding the quality of work done.

Set up an appointment with each of the contractors you have found and have them come out to review your project. Make sure you fully describe what you expect of the finished work.

What to Ask

Now that you have your contractors lined up and are waiting for them to come out it is time to write up a list of questions so you are sure to not miss anything.

Licensing: First and foremost make sure your contractor is licensed to work in your area. While you may get a great deal from a local handyman who isn't licensed you are subjecting yourself to possible failure in the finished product and unstable work situations. Someone who isn't licensed is unlikely to be able to get others to work for them. This is no time to skimp-hire professionals who have access to other professionals and can get your work done with the highest quality.

Get References: Don't fall for allowing them to give you a list of former clients they have hand-picked. Ask them for a list of their last 3 to 5 customers.

Don't Take Their Word For It: Of course each contractor is going to say their customers are happy. Don't be shy. Call the reference listings. People are generally happy to talk about their experiences especially if they feel they will be helping out someone else. If they are happy with the work they will tell you, if they weren't you can be sure you will hear about all of the problems they felt they encountered.

Inquire About Insurance: Make sure the contractors you are considering are insured against any damages they cause. Like any other insurance you hope you never have to use it, but are sure glad it's there when you do.

Professional Organizations: Find out if they are members of any builder's associations and call those organizations to find out if the contractor has any complaints against them.

Call the BBB: While many people fail to report problems to the Better Business Bureau if there are reports against your chosen contractor take heed and beware. Since many people don't report to them keep in mind that a clean report from the Better Business Bureau does not necessarily mean the contractor is good.

Local Laws: Make sure your contractor knows what the local zoning laws are regarding your construction project. If they say you will need to find out, or apply for permits you may want to look somewhere else. That is a basic knowledge they should have if they are active in your location, and filing for permits is their responsibility and should be billed to you as a part of the project.

Once you have all of your questions satisfactorily answered you can request bids on your project. As these bids come in from the various contractors remember that you should only consider the final amount when the other issues above are equal. Know that most contractors will require payment in thirds. 1/3 of the amount will be payable at the start of the project. This allows the contractor to purchase materials and pay help to start the project. 1/3 of the full amount will be due at the approximate middle of the project, and the final 1/3 will be due at completion.

About the Author

Alair Homes is a professional [nanaimo home builder](#) with a team of highly qualified builders and general contractors that are passionate about building quality homes that suit all aspects of west coast living. We will design, build, finish, and furnish the home or renovation you have been dreaming of. Visit us at www.alairhomes.com today.

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