



# Hiring Your Contractor

*"If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?" – John Wooden*

**F**inding an experienced professional remodeling contractor for your home improvement project doesn't have to be an unpleasant task. Our step by step selection process provides an easy method for collecting the criteria that allow homeowners to make informed decisions that best suit their needs.

Employ a home improvement contractor with an established business in your area that will provide a list of past references in your community. Local remodelers are more compelled to perform quality work that satisfies their customers in order for their business to excel. If possible, visit the completed project and interview the homeowner. An experienced contractor will also allow clients to visit a site with work in process.

Know the basics of your project such as needs versus wants, timeline and budget. If you already have a vision, write your ideas down or sketch them out. If you're still in search of inspiration we recommend attending local home shows, showrooms, remodeling magazines and online with Pinterest idea boards (we're savvy).

Many states, but not all, require contractors to be licensed and or bonded. Contact the [Washington Department of Labor & Industries](#) or [Oregon Construction Contractors Board](#) to ensure the contractor meets all requirements, including Workers Compensation Insurance in good standing. Ask the remodeling contractor for a current copy of applicable business licenses and certification of insurance to verify proper coverage for property damage and liability. Make sure the contractor's insurance coverage meets all the minimum requirements.

If you solicit bids from several different home improvement contractors, be sure they are bidding on the same scope and quality of work. Discuss variations in bids and beware of any bid that is substantially lower than the others. Other aspects of the bids can include proper warranties, permitting, time frames and paying living wages.

If a contractor is unable to serve you immediately understand that as a good sign, especially if they are upfront with you regarding their backlog of work. A quality contractor will warn you before they bid your project as not to waste your time. If your project is under a tight agenda ask the backlogged contractor for their recommendation for another qualified contractor.

# Scams

*Lookout for these warning signs*

- Provides a credential or reference that can't be verified.
- Offers a special price only if you sign today, or use other high-pressure sales techniques.
- Only accepts cash, require large deposits or the entire costs up front, or asks you to make the payment in their name.
- Does not provide a written contract or complete bid.
- Asks **you** to get the building permit. In most instances, if you have hired a contractor, the contractor is required to take out the permits. Permits are your protection and help ensure that work will meet local building codes.
- Offers exceptionally long warranties.
- Wants to do most or all the work on weekends and after hours.
- Gives you an offer that sounds "too good to be true."

## Other Resources

### **Consumer Affairs - Office of the Attorney General:**

[www.atg.wa.gov/SafeguardingConsumers/](http://www.atg.wa.gov/SafeguardingConsumers/)  
TDD users call 1-800-833-6384  
Consumer Resource Center: 1-800-551-4636

### **Better Business Bureau:**

[www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)  
206-431-2222 (western Washington)  
509-455-4200 (eastern Washington)

### **Oregon Construction Contractors Board**

[www.oregon.gov/ccb](http://www.oregon.gov/ccb)  
Licensing: 503-378-4621  
Email: [ccb.info@state.or.us](mailto:ccb.info@state.or.us)  
Fax: 503-373-2007

### **Washington Department of Labor & Industries:**

Labor & Industries handles complaints on manufactured home defects, warranties and other homeowner issues.

Consumer complaints about manufactured homes: 1-800-647-0982

### **Report fraudulent contractors**

Call: 1-888-811-5974  
[www.Fraud.Lni.wa.gov](http://www.Fraud.Lni.wa.gov)