



10 Things to Consider Before Hiring A Contractor

1. **Plan and Prioritize.** Determine your must-haves and what items are negotiable for your project. This will help keep the overall budget under control. Being able to pass on potentially costly items that are not part of your must-haves can save you a lot of money overall.
2. **Budget.** Construction projects of any kind can get very expensive very quickly, so know your budget and be firm in sticking to it when you develop the scope of work with the contractor. However, it's also a good idea to keep a 10% contingency overage in mind when making your budget. There is always the possibility of discovering unseen damages or encountering problems not included in the original scope of work that will require repair. This is the nature of construction projects, so keeping a "contingency fund" can help prevent stress during your project.
3. **Itemized Bid.** Get a written quote for the work you want done, including an itemized list of what each part of the project will cost. Don't go by lump sum estimates alone. How else will you know what you're paying for?
4. **Price.** Price is important, but it's not everything. Especially in construction, the old adage rings true: You get what you pay for. That said, don't assume that the least expensive contractor will be the worst and the most expensive the best.
5. **Check References.** What do their customers have to say about them? Find someone that has worked with the contractor and ask how the project went, and if they were pleased with the process and end result.
6. **"Nice" Factor.** Don't underestimate the value of working with someone that treats you with the respect and courtesy you deserve. Meet the contractor in person to make sure you feel comfortable with him. The person or company you hire could be involved in your life for several months, depending on the size of your project, so it's important that you like the person and feel comfortable with the company.
7. **Experience.** What kind of projects does the contractor specialize in? Does that experience fall in line with the type of project you're looking for?
8. **License and Insurance.** Make sure your contractor has a CSLB license, and check it out on the website to make sure they are actively licensed and bonded. To check a contractor's license, go to <https://www2.cslb.ca.gov/OnlineServices/CheckLicense/LicenseRequest.asp>
9. **Communication Style.** Be sure tell the contractor how you like to be communicated with, whether it's email, phone, in person, or other. Also, tell them how often you would like to be updated about the progress of the project. The contractor needs to be able to satisfy both of those needs.
10. **Trust Your Gut.**



**Ready to start your construction project?
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