



Checklist — Hiring a Contractor

What to do first

- Write a description of the work you want done, with as much detail as possible.
- Check with your municipal building department to ensure that the work can be done and if zoning approval or any special permits are required.

Find a contractor

- Ask friends and neighbours for recommendations.
- Get names from your family members, friends, local homebuilder and renovator associations, building supply outlets and, in some municipalities, your local building department.
- Ask contractors for their business licence number and check with the local licensing office and the firm's insurance company for public liability and property damage insurance and workers' compensation.
- Ask for references from past customers.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau for complaints against the contractor.

Establishing the cost: getting estimates or proposals

- Number of estimates or proposals: __1 __2 __3 Do you have:
- A complete description of the work to be done by the selected contractor?
- Samples and literature showing different products that could be used?
- Depending on the size of the project, plans or sketches and specifications of the work to be completed?

The contract should contain

- Correct and complete address of the property where the work will be done.
- Your name and address.
- Contractor's name, address, telephone and GST numbers.
- Detailed description of the work, plans (or sketches) and a detailed specification of the materials (type, quality, model) to be used.
- The right to retain a lien holdback as specified in provincial law.
- A clause stating that work will conform to the requirements of all applicable codes, such as building, safety and fire codes.
- Start and completion dates.
- The price and payment schedule (keep in mind the lien and seasonal holdbacks).
- Agreement on who (homeowner or contractor) is responsible for all necessary permits, licenses, inspections and certificates.

Contractor's responsibilities include:

- Public liability insurance.
- Property damage insurance.
- Identifying any necessary permits and ensuring all legal requirements are satisfied.
- Workers' compensation for all employees of the contractor or subcontractors.
- All work carried out under the contractor, including work done by subcontractors.
- Removal of construction debris when the job is finished.
- Warranties on all contractor supplied work and materials (in addition to manufacturer's warranties) for a period of at least one year.

Homeowner's responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that all contracted work conforms to zoning bylaws.
- Ensuring adequate working space and freedom of movement for workers, and use of utilities.
- Ensuring prompt payment according to the requirements of the law and the holdback and payment schedule.