

## What to consider when hiring a contractor:

1. **Experience:** Your project is an investment and one you don't want to hand over to just anyone. So, it's important that the contractor you hire have the experience to do the job right.
  - a. **Questions to ask:**
    - i. How long has the company been in business? Consider if there's a chance they might go *out of business* before completing your project.
    - ii. Have you completed projects that are similar in size and scope? Get a list and then visit those locations to inspect the quality of workmanship.
    - iii. How experienced is the Project Manager overseeing the project?
2. **Bonded and Insured** – These are important forms of protection for you, the customer. A surety bond serves as a form of insurance to protect you should a contractor be unable to complete your project. It also protects you should the contractor fail to pay for permits, subcontractors or other financial obligations. The contractor should also carry general liability and workers' compensation insurance. General liability insurance covers damage to your property. Workers' compensation pays anyone working on the job site who is injured on the job. You'll want to work with contractors who have general liability coverage of at least \$1 million. Hiring a contractor who is bonded/insured helps safeguard your project and investment.
  - a. **Questions to ask:**
    - i. Could you provide proof of insurability and bonding?
    - ii. Does the insurance cover the contractor's employees should they become injured?
    - iii. Does the insurance cover my employees and any visitors to my business if they are injured on the work site?
3. **Equipment** – Although you may not understand the type of equipment needed to complete your project, it's still an important topic to discuss with a contractor. Anyone can rent equipment from a local Rent-A-Center, but if they don't own how can you be sure they know how to properly operate it?
  - a. **Questions to ask:**
    - i. What types of equipment will you use?
    - ii. Do you own your equipment or rent it?
    - iii. How will my project's schedule be affected if your equipment breaks?
4. **Member Associations** – Consider the contractor's state and local associations. State associations often help their members by offering design consultation and advice. Associations also keep their members knowledgeable on current trends, technology, and best practices. A contractor who belongs to an association shows they're committed to their industry not just their pocketbook.
  - a. **Questions to ask:**
    - i. Are you a member of any associations?
    - ii. How long have you been a member of [insert name of association]?

**5. Reputation** – Every contractor has one. Before you decide on a contractor ask them for references and take the time to research them online. Use a search engine, their website, social media, and The Better Business Bureau to find reviews.

**a. Questions to ask:**

- i. Could I get contact information for previous customers who had similar projects in cost and scope?
  1. What was working with the contractor's crew like?
  2. Was communication with the contractor adequate?
  3. Did your job come in according to budget?
  4. Did you get the results you expected?
  5. Would you hire this contractor again?