

Hiring Home Contractors

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You may be hesitant to hire home contractors if you think they are too expensive or the task is one you can do yourself. However, home repairs and renovations can be more complex than do-it-yourself videos make them appear. If you make a mistake, then you could end up spending much more than if you had just hired a professional outright.

You may need to find home improvement contractors after buying your first home or years into homeownership. As a new homeowner, an experienced contractor can inform you of repairs or work you may need for your new purchase. If you have lived in your home for a while, then a contractor can assess wear-and-tear as well as ways to maximize your living space to enjoy your home for more years to come.

Since there are many home repair contractors available, it is important to select those who are reliable and fit your renovation project. In addition to budget-considerations, you will need to hire someone you trust to complete the project on time as well as with the quality you expect in your home. Find out more about contractors in the details below.

Types of Home Contractors and Services Offered

General home contractors coordinate projects to repair or renovate a private (non-commercial) structure. They will visit the site to assess needs, such as material, equipment and cost of labor, then submit a bid or estimate for the project. The bid proposal may include drawings of the renovation, like for an addition, or an itemized list for the overall cost.

In addition, home improvement contractors are responsible for obtaining any building permits and removing any construction waste from the property, which can save you a lot of hassle. Building or making certain repairs without a permit can result in fines from your city, county or state. Types of projects that often require a building permit include adding square footage, remodeling that involves structural changes, plumbing and electrical work.

To reduce home contractor cost, you may consider using a professional licensed for the job. For instance, an electrician should install wiring and breaker boxes. Contracting professionals include the following:

- Electricians and plumbers
- Heating and ductwork servicers
- Drywallers and painters
- Carpenters and cabinetmakers

- Roofers and landscapers
- Masons and excavators
- Interior designers

You may need one or several home repair contractors depending on the size of your project. For example, if your child flushes his or her favorite stuffed toy down the toilet and clogs the drain, then you may only need a plumber to fix the damage. However, if a natural disaster leaves your house in unlivable conditions, then you will need to hire roofers, carpenters and other professionals.

How to Find and Hire Home Improvement Contractors

Before searching for home contractors, create a thorough plan for your project. Not only will this help you to explain what you want but it will also give you an idea of what to expect in terms of costs.

To illustrate, you should check out tiles, fixtures and other components you wish to see in a bathroom remodel. A contractor may give you a lower bid than another if he is considering using cheaper materials that you may not want. Having specific details planned beforehand makes comparing home contractor cost estimates simpler if each professional is working from the same information.

Check the reviews on home repair contractors before asking for an estimate. The best referrals are from your friends and family, as you can check out their work firsthand. While a contractor may give you a very low bid, his or her work may be subpar and not what you want to see in your home every day.

There are also a few websites specifically for finding contractors and other professionals that list:

- Reviews from previous clients.
- Photos from prior projects.
- Licensing numbers.
- Rough estimates for job types.
- Contact information.

You should always verify that the contractor is insured. While your neighbor's cousin may do good work cheaply, accidents can happen, which can lead to costly problems if there is no protection.

After checking out reviews and receiving project estimates, interview prospective home improvement contractors to discuss specifics as well as determine if they are someone you can trust and communicate with. Home renovations can take time and often have unexpected surprises. It is important to hire a contractor who can handle change orders.

An interview is also a good time to ask about the project timeline. A contractor is a hot commodity in certain areas, and selecting a professional with multiple jobs may mean stretching out your project weeks longer than necessary. Likewise, unforeseen incidents can cause setbacks, and you should ask how he or she prevents and deals with these problems.