

A Guide for Hiring a Professional Painting Contractor

Use these questions to evaluate every painter you talk to and avoid missed deadlines, hidden charges and poor workmanship

<p>Our industry has not inspired a lot of confidence from the buying public. This tool will help you find the right painting contractor FOR YOU.</p>			
Essential Qualifications and Ethical Standards			
<p>Does the owner have 20 years of experience and has he or she supervised more than 700 successful painting projects? In our area, anyone can buy a vehicle and some tools and call themselves a roofer. Be certain that you consider only roofing contractors that have been in business for at least five years.</p>	✓		
<p>Are you licensed as a Home Improvement contractor in the State of New Hampshire, and will you provide us with your license number? Although licensing is not required in all of the areas we serve, using a licensed contractor assures you that they have the required expertise to complete your installation or repair the right way.</p>	✓		
<p>Do you stand behind your work with a two year labor and workmanship guarantee? One of the most important considerations when hiring the right contractor is whether they stand behind their work. Eliminate any contractor who doesn't offer at least a 2-year guarantee of their work <i>in writing</i>.</p>	✓		
<p>Do you maintain \$#1 million of liability insurance, as well as workers compensation insurance, to protect homeowners, and will provide your certificate to us? It is crucial that you confirm your contractor's insurance. Without proper insurance, an injury on your property – or damaged caused by workers – could become your responsibility.</p>	✓		
<p>Do you have letters of good standing from your business bank and key local suppliers? Well-established painting contractors will be able to provide letters of reference from their bank and at least two local suppliers indicating that they are in good standing. Avoid contractors who cannot demonstrate proof of their financial stability.</p>	✓		
<p>Will you supply me with at least 25 local references I can call? Reputable, established painting contractors have many past clients who will give references. Beware of a contractor who refuses to give you references, or has only a small handful of references.</p>	✓		
<p>Will you provide a written, guaranteed-price proposal showing ALL project costs? Without a detailed, price-guaranteed proposal, you'll be left in the dark wondering how much your painting project will cost when the work is done, and it's likely you'll be one of the many homeowners who suffers sticker shock when the bill is presented to you.</p>	✓		
<p>Are you listed on the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America Find-A-Pro search engine? Contractors listed on PDCA's Find-A-Pro search engine are members of PDCA and agree to abide by the PDCA Code of Ethics. They must be licensed to do business as mandated in their State or area, and they must also be insured as mandated in their State or locations where they do business.</p>	✓		
<p>Are you an accredited member of the Better Business Bureau with the highest rating? The BBB rates companies based on information obtained about the business, including complaints received from the public.</p>	✓		
<p>Are you Certified in Lead Safe Work Practices as required by Federal Law (effective April 22, 2010)? The federal government requires special training and practices to be followed when working on structures that may have lead paint. For your family's safety, never allow a painter who is not certified in these practices to work in your home.</p>	✓		
<p>Have you filed for bankruptcy for this or any other company you were the owner of, or are you currently involved in any litigation related to the services you perform? Contractors come and go, sometimes closing one business and opening under another name to avoid creditors or past clients. A company that has never been involved in litigation is one that delivers on its promises.</p>	NO		
<p>Do you have strict, written policies that prohibit smoking and the use of drugs and alcohol by your crews? Contractors should respect your home and disallow their crew members from using alcohol or drugs, as well as smoking on the job.</p>	✓		

Quality Standards			
Do you have written, step-by-step painting processes that your crews are required to follow? Without detailed painting processes, steps may be missed by the crews doing the work, meaning you may be disappointed in your newly painted home, and the finish may not last. (Our painting process is included with this Consumer Guide.)	✓		
Will only qualified, trained employees of your company be working on our project to assure consistent quality and results? Sadly, some contractors use inexperienced workers without the knowledge and skill to properly prepare surfaces or apply finishes, which will result in a disappointing outcome and earlier failure of the finish.	✓		
Will you remove, label, and reinstall all door, window and electrical hardware? Many painting contractors cut corners by painting around door, window, and electrical hardware, which results in obvious and unsightly flaws in the finish.	✓		
Will you spackle, caulk or fill all minor wall imperfections, cracks, nail pops and voids with premium grade materials and make minor carpentry repairs like nailing in loose moldings? This is the area where painters most often cut corners. Proper preparation of the surface is the most important step to assuring a beautiful outcome.	✓		
Do you provide a walk-through with the homeowner at the completion of the job? Quality painting contractors want to show you their work, and give you an opportunity to point out areas that may need a touch up, before you pay them.	✓		
Client Care Standards			
Do you have dedicated office support and a firm policy to return all missed calls within one hour on normal work days? Customers are the lifeblood of any company and they deserve a prompt response. Rule out contractors who don't answer their phones or don't return your call promptly.	✓		
Do you offer color consultation services? Color selection can be difficult. The most professional painting contractors will offer consultation in all aspects of color, design, theme, and finish options to help you match your taste and style.	✓		
Will you seal off work areas if necessary to prevent dust, and cover all floors, furniture and other items to prevent drips and damage? This is a simple courtesy that every painter should extend to you to keep your home and yard clean and damage-free.	✓		
Does your crews have a written daily cleanup checklist? A written cleanup checklist assures that your property will not be left a mess, and is a sign that a company cares about its clients.	✓		
Will you provide, in writing, expected start and completion dates for my project? One of the frustrations faced by homeowners is the painter who doesn't show up when expected, or who begins a project and then disappears for days at a time.	✓		
Do you require a deposit? Look for a contractor who does not require a deposit to secure your start date. Sadly, unscrupulous operators have been known to accept a large deposit, then disappear.	✓		
Do you accept credit cards for our convenience? Accepting payment by credit card is a sign of a professional company.	✓		
Will you give me an opportunity to complete a customer satisfaction survey? Very simply, companies who ask for your feedback are always looking for ways to improve their services.	✓		
Do you maintain a record of all materials and colors used on our project? It's frustrating when damage occurs and there is no record of the color and type of paint used.	✓		

Getting the best value – not the lowest price – is every consumer's goal. This guide gives you the information you need when it comes to evaluating, hiring and working with a professional painting contractor. A low price may look attractive but that usually means the contractor will cut some corners on quality in order to make a profit.

We know this sets a standard that we can be proud of and that the majority of our competitors can't match. At our first meeting, we will gladly provide you with proof that we meet these standards.

Before you consider hiring any painting contractor – ask them these questions and ask for **written proof that they meet these standards.**

Residential Interior Painting Project Survey

Name _____ Best Phone _____
Email _____
Address _____ City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

1. **What year was your home built?** _____
2. **What rooms will we be working in? Check all that apply:**
 Living/Family Room Kitchen Bedroom Bathroom Dining Room Utility Room Garage Sunroom/Enclosed Porch Other _____ (please describe)

3. **What surfaces will be addressing? Check all that apply:**
 Walls Ceilings Trim Floors Doors Windows Cabinets
 Other _____ (please describe)

4. **Will we be making any extensive repairs to any surfaces prior to painting?**
Yes/No Please Describe if yes: _____

5. **Do you have any colors preselected? Yes/No** If so, please list them here:

Room	Surface	Color Name	Color #	Manufacturer	Sheen
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

6. **Have you ever hired a professional painting contractor in the past? Yes/No**
7. **When were these surfaces last painted approximately?** _____ (I don't know)
8. **Do you have any paint or product remaining from the last project? Yes/No (circle one)**
9. **Do you or anyone in the home suffer from a medical condition such as allergies or other health considerations we should be aware of? Yes/No** Please describe if yes: _____
10. **Do you have children in the home? Yes/No** Special considerations? _____
11. **Do you have pets in the home? Yes/No** Special considerations? _____
12. **Are there any schedule considerations that are unique to your home we should be aware of? Yes/No**
Please describe if yes: _____
13. **Irreplaceable Items:** While we move larger pieces of furniture for our customers if they are unable, we ask our customers to move all furniture, pictures, baubles, nick-nacks, and small decorative items to the center of the room to be covered and protected. Do you have any family heirlooms, extremely fragile items, or other sentimental items that should be removed from the work area entirely? Yes/No If yes, please remove them for their safety as an added precaution.
14. **Working Hours:** We typically begin our work day at 8AM and conclude at or before 5pm. Monday-Saturday, unless other arrangements have been made or the drying or processing of coatings to completion require otherwise. Are these operational hours satisfactory with you? Yes/No. If no, please let us know how we can serve you better:

15. **Briefly Describe Your Project and What You Are Trying to Accomplish:**

