Contractors

When a renovation is done right, it can improve the look and value of your home. Choosing a contractor carefully can help your plans go smoothly.

What you need to know:

1. Establish the **overall scope of your project** at the beginning. Changing plans in the middle of a project is likely to cost you extra.

2. Ask neighbours and people you know to tell you about experiences they've had with the contractor you are interested in hiring and check the **"Consumer Beware List"** at Ontario.ca/ConsumerBeware to see if the ministry has taken action against them.

3. Ask for written estimates from at least three different contractors and compare them before making your decision.

4. Once you select a contractor, make sure the estimate is included as part of the written contract you get from them. This way, the contractor cannot charge you more than **10 per cent over** the original estimate unless you agree to new or different work.

5. Check with your municipality about **permits** you'll need and how much they cost. Unless it's specified in your contract, it's up to you to secure these permits.

6. **Avoid "under the table" cash deals.** Reputable companies meet all legal requirements including collecting and paying applicable taxes.

Ask the right questions when hiring a contractor

- Can I get at least three references from people who have recently hired you for a similar project that you have completed?
- Will you provide a **written estimate?**
- Will the contract set out how **disputes** will be resolved?
- How much do you usually ask for as a **down payment?** What do you base this on? (No more than 10 per cent of the total project cost is recommended.)
- Will you be **subcontracting** any of the work?

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