

Selecting your Contractor

Besides a suitable design, the most important aspect of any successful construction project is selecting the right contractor.

Select your contractor based on the following;

- 1) **Quality / skill:** *that has the skill to do a quality project.*
- 2) **Service / schedule:** *will take care of you and your house and do the job in a reasonable amount of time.*
- 3) **Price:** *will provide the adequate service within your budget.*

The old adage “*you get what you pay for*” is usually true because quality takes time and skill, and that often means more cost. In short, you need to select a contractor **you** are comfortable with and that gives you a level-of-confidence in their ability to complete your project.

How to select your contractor:

Identify: prepare a list of potential bidders.

Get recommendations from Internet, friends, family or neighbors who have had similar projects done with satisfactory results. Contact local trade-associations for contractor members. Eg. *National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI)*, *Home Builders Association (HBA)* or *Building Industry Association (BIA)*. Contact the Better Business Bureau (BBB) before calling a prospective bidder because they may be able to provide information about a contractor.

Pre-qualify: Prepare a list of qualified bidders.

Obtain references from the potential contractors. Absolutely call the references. Ask lots of questions, and ask to see as many of their projects as possible. Most homeowners are willing to show off successful projects. Checking references and looking at projects similar to yours is the most important thing you can do prior to selecting a contractor.

Questions to ask a potential bidder:

- How long have you been in business?
- Are you a trade association member?
- Is your company a full-service firm? Can you do it all?
- Do you have employees or do you rely on sub-contractors?
- Do you always obtain legally required permits?

Determine if you are financing work that a bidder is acceptable to your lending institution.

Select a qualified bidder.

Avoid accepting proposals from unqualified bidders. Get three (3) estimates that are clear and detailed. Be sure that all the potential bidders' proposals cover the same scope and quality of work. Beware of a bid that varies from the plan or is significantly lower than the others.