

15 Things You Must Know Before Hiring a Painter

How to avoid rip-offs...and get a quality job at a reasonable price



www.BoulderPainter.com

Having your home painted is a major expense. Hiring the wrong company for this important job can turn your project into a costly and maddening nightmare. And doing it yourself could cost more – in wasted time and poor results – than hiring a professional.

Use the following 15-question checklist with any painting contractor you're considering hiring. This will help you find an experienced, quality painter who will do excellent work on your property.

1 What kind of paint do you use?

Paint quality can vary, so it's important to know the brand and type of paint that will be used on your property. Good painters will usually recommend quality paint, but don't hesitate to ask for options and make sure your potential contractor can explain what benefits a more expensive paint has to offer over a less pricy one. Also, asking for information on the manufacturer's warranty or any data regarding reliability may help you decide what kind of paint is best for your property. People sensitive to "new paint smell" may also wish to inquire about the option of using paint that contains low VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds).

2 Is your estimate a flat rate one?

When asking a painting contractor for a quote on the cost of your job, make sure you get in writing what exactly is included in that quote and how firm that price is. There's nothing worse than choosing a contractor with a good price and then having them come back to you later with additional charges. Make sure your original quote specifies the areas to be painted, the number of coats, the materials to be used, labor and how long the job will take. Be sure to ask if there are any additional fees or expenses that might be involved. The more specifics included in your quote, the easier it will be to compare costs between bids.

3 Do you offer a written guarantee?

When discussing guarantees, be sure to get whatever your painting contractor promises you in writing. Otherwise, you may find that a verbally promised guarantee provides no more than what the manufacturer offered. But you need to know what your painting contractor will do in the event of problems with your painting job. Quality painters will stand behind their work and be willing to clearly say so in writing.

4 How long will it take to complete my job?

After your painting job has begun, you want to be certain that your contractor will work on it continuously until it is completely done. Living in the midst of a half-finished job while waiting for a painter who is off on other projects makes the whole experience much harder than it needs to be. Ensure that the contractor you hire will show up reliably every day until your project is done.

5 How will you protect non-painted surfaces?

Make sure your painter has a clear plan for protecting nearby areas from paint splatters and spills. Your roof, driveway, planters, furniture, floors or windows may all need to be protected.

6 How will you prepare the surface for painting?

Well-done prep work makes a big difference in the quality of the finished paint job. Ask your potential contractor what their plans are regarding sanding, washing and scraping the surfaces that need painting.

7 Will you be using a primer before painting?

If you are having a bare surface painted, a primer will be necessary. A surface that is being repainted will not usually need a primer.

8 What areas will you caulk before painting?

Caulking is key to a successful paint job. If a painter does not caulk seams, joints, gaps or cracks in the surface, moisture may get behind the paint and cause it to fail.

9 What can I expect regarding clean up after the job is done?

Nobody wants to spend a lot of money on a paint job only to find themselves spending hours cleaning up after the painter. Find out beforehand what clean-up is included and how they plan to leave your property after the job is finished.

10 Who will supervise my project?

If the person giving you the estimate will not be the person supervising your job, you may want to ask to meet that person beforehand and find out how much experience they have to ensure you are comfortable with them.

11 Will you use subcontractors for painting?

It's important to know if the firm you hire does not plan on doing the work themselves. If this is the case, you again want to be certain that you can trust whoever it is that will actually be working on your property.

12 How long have you been in business?

When choosing a painting contractor, experience is important. Checking with the local Better Business Bureau for any complaints can help give you a sense of a contractor's reliability and quality. www.Angieslist.com is another resource you can check to see what kind of reviews your contractor has gotten from previous customers.

13 What references can you give me?

Be sure to ask your contractor for the names and phone numbers of at least two references. You'll want to know if their previous customers were happy with the quality of the job, how well the painter protected non-painted surfaces, and whether they were courteous and pleasant to work with.

14 Are you insured?

All contractors are required to carry insurance for liability and property damage, as well as worker's compensation.

15**Can I see the contract?**

Any contract you sign for a painting job should include the total cost and when payment is required, the work you are having done, a starting date and estimated completion date, the brand of paint and colors that will be used in each place, and how many coats will be done. The contract should also state that the painter is responsible for cleaning up and removing paint from surfaces such as windows and floors.

Asking the above questions of each contractor you interview will help ensure you get the best quality work at a reasonable price.

**For more information about finding
a quality house painter, email**

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