

Hiring A Painting Contractor 101: The Ultimate Guide

Having your home painted is time consuming and costly. Keeping this in mind, the least you would want is a bad experience and the eventual frustration from it. Since there are so many painting contractors available to pick from, the chance of making a poor hiring choice is high. On paper, all of them advertise their services as professional and superior to the alternative contractors. However, in reality, there are some painting contractors that hire unskilled and even unlicensed painters to do the paint jobs.

In the hustle bustle of furnishing their home, many property owners do not consider the possibility of being duped by their painting contractor. You certainly do not want to make the same blunder. So how do you know the difference between the high quality painting contractors and the deceptive ones?

The answer lies in our comprehensive guide, which gives you a checklist to efficiently eliminate all the amateur contractors and lets you have the painting done by a reliable contractor.

[YOUR PAINTING BUSINESS]'s Exclusive Painting Contractor Checklist

Quick Checklist:

- Painting Contractor Has Relevant Insurances
- Painting Contractor Company Is A Member of Better Business Bureau
- Painting Contractor Company Provides References And Samples
- Working Crew Has Cleared Background Checks
- The Painters Are Employees For The Contracting Company
- The Painting Contractor Uses High Quality Materials
- The Painting Contractor Has A Manager On Site
- The Painting Crew Is Trained And Licensed
- The Painting Crew Has Safety Training
- Painting Contractor Gives A Decent Warranty

Painting Contractor Has Relevant Insurances

You must only hire a painting contractor which has an active insurance in its business. Primarily, there are two types of insurances that you should ask the painting contractor for:

1. Comprehensive Business Liability (CBL) Insurance
2. Workmen's Compensation Insurance

The first type of insurance provides you coverage, in case the contractor causes any damage to your property while doing the paint job. The contractor should have a minimum limit of at least a million dollars for the CBL insurance, as a reflection of its high quality paint job execution.

The second type of insurance is also a must for any reputable painting contractor company. It protects the painting workmen and the hirer (you in this case) from any liabilities, during the painting project. Generally, the Workmen's Compensation insurance is very expensive to keep active, so only the high performing contractors will be having it, while other small time or amateur contractors will try to do without it.

While surveying the contractors in your area, you must ask them about these insurances and check the relevant papers. Some contractors may try to distract you or avoid providing the document proving the insurances. Others may verbally state that they have active insurance policies in place. However, you must insist upon seeing the papers. Some contractors may go to the extent of changing dates on expired policy documents to prove that their services are insured. You must be wary and calculate the period shown on the policy, since the insurances are only for one year terms. If you have any doubts about the legality of the documents, you should always ring up the insurance provider and clarify the status for yourself.

Also note that some painting contractors may only have one of these insurances active. This is again a bad sign. Most contractors avoid having Workmen's Compensation policy in their company, due to the large costs involved. However, you should not consider such a contractor, as when they do not care about its painting team, it is highly unlikely that it would care about the customer.

[Painting Contractor Company Is A Member of Better Business Bureau](#)

A painting contractor being a member of organizations, such as Better Business Bureau (BBB), and associations, like the city's trade association, is an indication of its confidence in delivering high quality services to its customer.

Becoming a member of BBB and similar organizations requires a yearly fee, which reflects that the contractor is willing to sacrifice its profits in order for the customer to have confidence in the company and be satisfied.

Moreover, being a member of such organizations show that the company is official, stable and reliable. If there is an unprofessional behavior or low quality of services provided on the part of the contractor, it risks having its BBB accreditation rating lowered, which will damage the company's reputation and future hiring chances. Therefore, any contractor with a BBB's or other similar organization's accreditation will strive to deliver the best painting job and customer service, to maintain the high rating.

Being a member of the city / urban trade associations allows the painting contractor company to be up to date with the area's business practices, establish relationships with other businesses and improve their reputation.

Many painting contractors have developed various ways to dupe you in believing that the company is a member of an accreditation body or the local business group. They may do this by making up a dummy organization and certifying themselves from it, or by just placing the accreditation stamps of BBB and similar bodies on their website, cards and pamphlets, hoping you will not verify it.

☑ Painting Contractor Company Provides References And Samples

Before hiring a painting contractor, it is mandatory to have a look at some of the previous projects completed by the contractor. This will give you a good idea of what to expect from the contractor and whether the stated services match up with the finished project.

Most professional contractors will have no hesitation showing you the references of their previous projects. They will let you know the location of their project, the size of the project, contact number to verify details if needs, etc. If you want to verify the quality of the paint job done and the overall project experience, you can directly contact the owners of the homes and see if their feedback satisfies you.

You must check whether all the projects being shown in the reference are dated periodically (they should not be too old or too new but a mix), which would prove that the contractor has worked reliably over several years.

Also beware of being tricked by the contractors when you are going over the references. Some painting contractors put their relatives as their customers and use their homes as referencing. Other painters with poor reputation may not even come up with references or be hesitant about providing them.

☑ Working Crew Has Cleared Background Checks

Since the painting crew is going to spend several hours a day in your house, it is imperative that you are satisfied with their character and have an assurance from the contractor regarding their ethics during the painting job.

This is needed as there have been several reported cases of painting staff involved in burglarizing, kidnapping and even killing property owners! Mostly, such painting crew members already have a criminal background, which has either not been checked by the employer or has been ignored in return for a cut in the salary.

Therefore you must question the painting contractor, you are interested in hiring, about their hiring policy and the background checks they make on each employee. If you find something doubtful, do not hesitate in asking about it to ensure that you are hiring a safe group of painters.

If you need to be cent percent sure about the character of employees working in the painting company, you should ask the contractor for the background checking agency they work with. If the contractor has been lying to you, they would be unable to provide you with a name.

☑ The Painters Are Employees For The Contracting Company

Painting contractors may often be tempted in subcontracting painting crews, instead of hiring painting staff for full time. This allows them to get the work done for a flat and cheaper fee, compared to having to pay wages per hour, social security, taxes and company-funded benefits for operating full time employees.

While this may seem reasonable, considering that all businesses like to maximize their profits, but having subcontractors working at your home brings a handful of risks.

First and foremost, the subcontractors are not related with the painting company directly. This means that the painters working in your home may not have the background checks required to ensure safety of your home, its members and belongings.

Secondly, since the subcontracted painters are working on flat wages, instead of hourly wages, they do not see any commitment in working efficiently or doing a quality painting job. They may want to finish off the work as quickly as possible, and while doing so may resort to shoddy methods.

Thirdly, since these subcontracted painters are not the direct responsibility of the painting contractor you have hired, they may not have the adequate workmen's compensation insurance, which you were looking to have in the first place.

Now while you know that having subcontractors do the paint job at your home is not a good option, painting contractors may try to woo you by labelling them as 'team members', 'employees', 'company staff' and other hiring terms. You should ask to see the contracts of these employees or the payment slips from the previous months to be sure that the contractor has a full time and a reliable painting crew working under it.

The Painting Contractor Uses High Quality Materials

As mentioned at the start of the guide, painting your house is a costly process. You want the paint in your house to be durable and last for several years. This is only achievable by using high quality materials. Moreover, higher quality painting materials result in a better look and finishing.

You will find paint in the market selling for less than \$10 a gallon, while there is also paint that has a price tag upwards of \$50 a gallon. The price disparity reflects a real difference in the quality of chemicals used in producing the paint and the R&D involved in making the paint optimum for usage under various conditions. The premium paints last longer and is durable in all kinds of weather. Besides the paint, other materials used during the coloring process, such as caulk, must also be of a high quality, as these have a direct impact on the durability of the paint.

A good way of ensuring that the painting done in your house is from high quality materials is by asking the contractor directly about it. You should also ask why is the contractor preferring the painting materials, he says he is going to use, over other alternatives. It would be best if you get the contractor to write all the materials being used, with the brands and labels, in writing for your keeping and checking.

If a contractor is insisting on using cheaper or lower quality painting materials, it is better to avoid hiring it, rather than negotiating.

The Painting Contractor Has A Manager On Site

Painting contractor companies usually are very friendly before they get your work in their hand, with the owner answering all your questions personally and even visiting your site multiple times for your satisfaction. However, once the job has been started, many owners or managers are often absent throughout the whole project, leading to no proper management of the task, unless the contractor has implemented an efficient check and balance system.

You must ask your contractor about their line of execution, regarding the management of your painting job. Will they be present on site? If not, do they have a manager to take responsibility? Or do the

painting crew give periodic reports regarding the completion of the work? This will give you a sense of confidence regarding the progress and will also ensure that the whole project is executed smoothly.

An ideal management system should give updates to you regarding the completion of all the services you have hired the contracting company for. The head of this management system should be there for supervision of the work, to guide the painting crew and as a relay for communication between the workers and you. There should be milestones set for each service such as surface set up, scraping, adding protection layer, putting on the paint, cleaning up, etc. After the completion of each milestone, you should be updated by the supervisor in charge. It is recommended to have all the milestones in a contract, with expected date of completion, signed by both the contractor and you (hirer).

A painting contractor which has a similar efficient system in place will save you from a lot of headache, any miscommunication and possible complaints. You would be aware of the expected date of progress and can question the contractor in case of any delays. With a contract in hand, you can even contact the State Contractor's License Board or Better Business Bureau, in case the contractor violates the promised timeline of progress.

As a rule of thumb, painting contractors who hire subcontractors or minimum wage workers usually do not have a well laid out management system or a person in charge. Such contractors are more focused on making maximum profit and will try to save the extra expenditure from such a system in place.

The Painting Crew Is Trained And Licensed

Painters who have received official training and certification are more adept at completing the paint job efficiently, using the best techniques and appropriate materials.

Despite their skills, many painting contractors may avoid hiring licensed painters due to their higher wages per hour, compared to an inexperienced painter. Moreover, if the painting contractor is letting subcontractors take over the painting job, it has no direct control over the experience level or the professional status of the painters involved in the project.

By choosing a contractor which has permanent painter employees, you get to have an assurance that the painting staff is trained. (*Note: Smaller contractors may not have the budget for training their employees, even if the painters are full time workers*).

Having a professionally licensed painting staff working in your home will result in the painting project completing without any delays, having less chances of any mistakes and with no accidents to your belongings or the workers themselves.

To check if the contractor you plan on hiring has a training program, you should directly ask the company to tell you about their training in detail. Learn about the dates and the program schedule of their previous training. Check if they have any document to support their claim, such as a pamphlet or a company notice. You should also check the official listed experience of the painters employed by the company and whether the experience matches up with the claims of the contractor. If they are associated with any painting association or have contact with any paint manufacturer program, you should ask them to give you a contact for an official confirmation, especially if you feel that the contractor is not being completely honest.

☑ The Painting Crew Has Safety Training

While the painting training is necessary to complete the job with perfection and professionalism, you must also consider the crew working in your home to have adequate safety training, especially during an emergency.

Painting is an intensive job, requiring painters to stand on ladders and work on narrow ledges. Accidents can happen and unless the painting staff is properly trained for appropriate action during the mishap, your project may be delayed and, even worse, your home may suffer damage.

While you would definitely hope that no accident occurs during the completion of your painting job, taking proper precaution will save you from any headache if there is a mishap. To ensure that the painters are well trained, you should ask the contractor about their safety policy. You should also insist on having a look at any written manual that they use for training, previous history of training sessions and any certified educator they hire for instructions.

Perhaps a demonstration of a safety drill would be the best way to see if the staff which is going to work in your house is prepared for any emergency.

☑ Painting Contractor Gives A Decent Warranty

When hiring a painting contractor, it is very important to ask it about the warranty policy for the paint job or any guarantees after completion. Many professional companies provide decent warranties for their paint jobs, depending upon the type and the city, but most poor painting contractors totally avoid giving any warranties or just give unrealistic warranties (20 years, 25 years, etc.).

Ideally, you should be looking for a painting contractor which provides warranty between 1 and 3 years. Usually, if the painting contractor used any inferior materials during the paint job, it would start showing within a year. While discussing about warranty, you must also ask the painting contractor about the terms and conditions regarding the warranty policy. If the contractor has provided you with a document stating the policy, you should read any fine prints mentioned at the end of the document. Warranties usually do not cover all the materials involved in the paint job, so you should be clear about what parts of the project are covered by the contractor.

Before hiring the contractor, you should get the warranty in writing and have the signature of the contractor, with the date of project start.

A great way of testing whether the contractor you are planning to hire has a good warranty policy is to ask questions about the policy. For instance, you can ask about the source of funding for the warranty program or ask for any references of previous hirers who used the warranty program. If the contractor is duping you, it will avoid answering the questions or use delaying tactics like having a discussion on it later. The quickness and frankness with which the contractor responds to your queries should give you a hint about the reliability of its warranty policy.

Conclusion

To ensure that you have the best experience with a painting contractor and that the paint job in your home is of the highest quality, you must check that the painting contractor you hire passes all the points mentioned in our checklist.