

Tips for Choosing a Contractor

Here are some tips to help you choose the contractor that's right for you:

TIP # 1: Find a reputable contractor

Ask friends and family for recommendations

A recommendation from someone you know and trust, like a family member or neighbour, can help make your decision easier. You can also get names of contractors from local homebuilder and renovation associations, building supply stores and municipal building departments.

There are benefits to a local contractor

Although not necessary, you may want to look for a company with history in your community. An out-of-area contractor may not be familiar with local building standards and may not be able to provide you with quick service.

Tips for finding a reputable contractor

The following sources are available for contractor recommendations:

- Better Business Bureau sets standards for businesses and offers an accredited business directory on their website: <https://www.bbb.org/en/ca>
- Homestars connects homeowners with reputable contractors through their website: <https://homestars.com/>
- Ontario Energy Board offers information and customer protection tips on their website: <https://www.oeb.ca/>
- The TrustedPros recommend trusted home service professionals on their website: <https://trustedpros.ca/>
- Local home improvement stores offer installation services using professional contractors

TIP # 2: Ask for references and contractor qualifications

Complete a reference check

Ask for a list of customer references and consider checking them. Former customers are an excellent source of information and checking references and credentials is important, even if the contractor came recommended.

Ask to see insurance certificates

It is important to check that the contractor has current liability insurance and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage for injuries to staff on the job and any damages they may cause. Without this protection you, the homeowner, could be liable for any injuries or damages resulting from your renovation work. Ask to see the contractor's insurance certificates and make sure that they are current.

TIP # 3: Ensure program requirements are being met

Explain the Peel Renovates Program expectations

If you have been approved for the Peel Renovates Program, let the contractor know the work is being approved through the Peel Renovates program and explain the expectations.

Review your quotes or estimates to ensure:

- You get the quote in writing. Never accept oral quotes or agreements
- The quote has a detailed description of the approved Scope of Work
- You clearly understand the total price and the cost of work to be performed
- The terms of payment are clear. Monthly payment plans are NOT accepted under the Peel Renovates program
- A schedule of work is provided, with the start and completion dates clearly shown.
Note: Ensure the contractor can complete the job on time
- All contractors must have an HST number
- The contractor provides their Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) clearance number
- The contractor provides you with proof of licensing

TIP # 4: Review the contract before you sign

Before you sign a contract with a contractor

- Read it carefully and understand what it says. Ensure that it describes exactly what you want and what you have been promised.
- Understand what labour and materials are covered under warranty and for how long

After you have signed the contract

Under the Consumer Protection Act in Ontario, all contracts for goods or services signed in the consumer's home that are worth more than \$50, are subject to a ten (10) day cooling off period. This means that you have ten (10) days from the date you receive a signed contract to cancel. It is illegal for the business or individual to give you false information about themselves or the product or services that they offer.

Some examples of misrepresentation include:

- Claiming that they have licenses, accreditation or certification when they don't
- Showing fake safety certification or accreditation for an item
- Stating that the product is a certain grade, style, model or quality when it isn't
- Promising to deliver a service or product when they know (or should know) this is not possible
- Recommending unnecessary repairs or replacements to items

For more information regarding this, contact the Consumer Helpline at 416-326-8800 (TTY 416-229-6086).

For more tips on knowing your rights when starting home renovations or repairs, visit: <https://www.ontario.ca/consumers/home-renovations-and-repairs>

Note: The Region of Peel is not able to recommend specific contractors and does not maintain a list of preferred contractors.