

Is the contractor capable of handling the complexity of your job?

What are their specialties, and are those skills required on your job? If you need a new light in your kitchen, it may be best to call an electrician directly. If the kitchen must be renovated because it is not light enough, then you will need someone that is able to coordinate and manage many skilled trades people while you carry on your activities of daily life. Full Spectrum is interested in how their clients live in a house and how the various components of a house interact with each other. This makes us ideally suited to handle complex remodeling issues that involve many different trades to achieve the desired effect – a completed project that meets and exceeds the client's expectations.

Is the remodeling contractor insured?

If someone gets hurt on the job, and it can happen, you may have to pay for that workman's injuries and support unless your contractor is properly insured. Request a copy of your contractor's insurance policy and make sure their coverage is adequate. Full Spectrum Construction's carries both liability insurance and workman's compensation insurance and we require that our trade contractors do as well.

Is the contractor licensed to work in your city or county?

Contractors must be licensed in the localities in which they operate. Louisville Metro requires all licensed contractors complete continuing education courses through the HBAL, provide proof in insurance, and annually renew their contractor's licenses. Full Spectrum is licensed to work throughout Louisville and the surrounding counties.

Will the contractor furnish a list of your past customers?

Most contractors can provide a list of 2 or 3 references. Ask for five to ten names, then call three or four. You may even ask to look at a completed project. Much can be determined from the comments and opinions of past clients.

Will the contractor furnish a list of trade and financial references?

You need to know with whom you are dealing. Do they pay their bills? Do other industry professionals respect them? If they do not operate profitably or professionally, they will not be around to deal with warranty issues that may arise.

What is the contractor's background and how experienced are they in remodeling?

You don't want your home to be a training ground for someone trying to learn the business or a haven for "moonlighters" that perform jobs "on the side". Full Spectrum Construction had over 11 years experience as a professional remodeling contractor. Our team members are required to attend locally and nationally sponsored training conferences that deal with all aspects of our business. Full Spectrum specializes in successful remodeling.

Is the remodeling contractor a member of the local Home Builder's Association?

Membership in organizations like the Home Builder's Association of Louisville (HBAL) or the National Association of Home Builder's (NAHB) demonstrate a contractor's desire to excel in their profession and require a certain level of professionalism. To maintain their membership, these associates require that their members adhere to the by-laws and code of ethics of the organization.

What certifications or professional designations does the contractor hold?

CGR stands for Certified Graduate Remodeler. Contractors that earn this designation have successfully completed a course curriculum set forth by the National Remodeler's Council and have derived their sole source of income from the remodeling industry for more than five years. CAPS stands for Certified Aging in Place Specialist and a CGP is a Certified Green Professional. Individuals that earn these designations also have successfully completed course curriculum set forth by the National Remodeler's Council. To maintain these certifications, contractors must participate in continuing education classes and maintain a code of conduct established by the National Remodeler's Council. Full Spectrum maintains each of these certifications.

Does the Contractor have a set of written guidelines that outline how they will conduct business?

Do you know what constitutes a change in the scope of work? Is there a system for invoicing and payment? What will happen if unanticipated items are encountered? How will time-and-materials billed tasks be calculated? All these issues as well as many others are addressed in Full Spectrum Construction's Policies and Procedures, which we will review with you prior to initiating your remodeling project.

Will the Contractor provide detailed written specifications or a Scope of Work?

More problems and misunderstandings develop in this area than anywhere else. Be sure you clearly understand what the contractor is doing and what he is not doing. If there are specific elements that you want included in the project make sure they are detailed. What allowances are included in the project budget? Without a detailed presentation of activities, how can you compare multiple bids? How will you know what tasks are included or that all tasks are completed? Faucets are available for \$15 and \$1,500, which are you getting? Is that what you expected? Full Spectrum develops a Scope of Work for each project then reviews our specifications with our clients to ensure that all issues are addressed and to identify potential problem areas. We have found that taking additional time to plan will result in a more efficiently run job, with less surprises, performed in a shorter amount of time. You will know what to expect before we begin.

What kind of guarantee does the contractor offer and is it in writing?

Read and question the guarantee. At Full Spectrum Construction, Inc., we offer a written, one-year guarantee. Additionally, because we provide you with a copy of all product manufacturer documentation extended warranties may be applicable on certain elements.

How much does the contractor charge for estimates?

If an estimate is free, most often it is worth what you paid for it. There are many considerations when undertaking any sort of project; accurate job costs will be based on the site features, product selection, skilled labor availability, manufacturer installation guidelines, and a host of other factors. With the amount of time and energy it takes to furnish a professional presentation of CAD drawings, computer modeling, and detailed specifications, one can no longer expect this service for free. Full Spectrum Construction's initial consultation, which will include a preliminary, estimated range of probable project costs, is free. However, we require a signed Professional Service Agreement prior to providing site-specific planning and developing accurate job costs. Activities performed as part of the Professional Services Agreement are performed on a time and materials basis, and all but the initial retainer is credited to a signed construction agreement.

How much money does the Contractor require up front?

This varies greatly between companies and types of projects; as a general rule you should not expect a large down payment (typically <10% on larger jobs). Usually, Full Spectrum requires a non-refundable retainer to initiate project planning activities and may require a project initiation payment before site activities begin. Progress payments based on tasks completed, changes made, and pending activities are submitted on or around the 1st and 15th of each month with a 10-day grace period for payment.

How will your contractor supervise your project?

Supervision of a project is subject to the depth of experience of their personnel. At Full Spectrum Construction a Project Lead or Manager is assigned to every job and will be responsible for the successful completion of all project tasks for the duration of the project. While this does not mean that someone will be onsite 100% of the time, it does mean that when activities are performed we will be actively directing, monitoring, and documenting the planning and performance of tasks.

Will work be performed on my project every day?

With today's trend to rely more on trade contractors and less on employees, this question is very important. Almost all companies use trade contractors to some degree (in fact insurance companies or local regulating agencies may require the use of licensed trade contractors for many activities). It is important for you to know how this will impact your project. Full Spectrum can not guarantee that onsite work will be performed each day. We do, however, guarantee that proper project planning will keep periods of inactivity to a minimum, and we do keep you informed of the status of site activities.

The selection of a contractor can be the most important factor in a successful remodeling project. Too many times this decision is based on price alone. It is true that price may be an important factor in this decision process, but rarely does lower-price mean less profits for the remodeling contractor. Most often, low price is merely an indication of an incomplete project or inferior materials. There are three interconnected facets of construction; quality, quantity (time and space), and cost. If any one of these variables is altered, at least one of the other two must change as well. A good contractor will provide you with multiple options so you can tailor your project to your budget and achieve the desired project outcome. You and your contractor are a team that should work together to overcome the artistic, technical and financial challenges that the work itself presents. When selecting a remodeling professional with whom to work, the first criterion should be character; the second, competence; the third, dedication. More often than not, homeowners are in the difficult position of dealing with individuals that know more about design and construction than they do. In this vulnerable situation, the best strategy is to choose professionals of unquestionable integrity.