

The 10-Question Contractor Interview

Hire

1. Are you licensed and insured? Show me proof.

No license, no insurance, no deal. A real pro shows both without blinking.

2. Can I see 3 recent jobs like mine -- with phone numbers?

Photos are nice. Phone numbers are better. Call at least two.

3. Who is actually doing the work -- you or a sub crew?

The person selling you the job is rarely the person swinging the hammer. Know who is.

4. Give me the full price, in writing, line by line.

One number on a napkin is not a bid. Every line item, on paper, before you sign.

5. What is the start date -- and the finish date?

Vague timelines turn into months. Get both dates, in writing.

6. How do you handle changes once the job starts?

Change orders are where budgets die. Ask how they are priced and approved.

7. Who pulls the permits -- and who pays if it fails inspection?

If the answer is 'you,' that is a red flag. Pros handle their own permits.

8. What is the payment schedule?

Never pay it all up front. Small deposit, progress payments, final check after you walk the finished job.

9. What warranty do I get -- and what does it actually cover?

'Satisfaction guaranteed' is not a warranty. Get the length and the terms.

10. If something goes wrong, what is your fix process?

Every job has a surprise. You are hiring how they handle the bad day, not the good one.