

Finding a Good Contractor



A good contractor can be hard to find! Whether you're looking for someone to install new HVAC, rewire your house, or fix your plumbing, there are some guidelines you can follow to make sure the person you're hiring is the right one for the job.

- Ask friends, family, and professional networks for personal recommendations. A good first-hand experience with a contractor is a great place to start.
- Ask your salesperson. Companies that sell insulation, HVAC equipment, etc often have preferred installer networks.
- Verify licensing and insurance:
 - State licensing is required for HVAC, electrical, and plumbing contractors. Ask to see their license or check online at https://dhbc.ky.gov/Search/HBC_List_Licensees.aspx.
 - Licensed Master Electricians, HVAC, and plumbing contractors are required to have general liability and worker's compensation insurance. For other contractors, ask to see proof of insurance before hiring.
- Look for professional certifications whenever possible.
 - Energy auditors, insulation, and HVAC contractors:
 - Building Performance Institute (BPI)
 - Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET)
 - Just for HVAC contractors:
 - North American Technician Excellence (NATE)
 - HVAC Excellence
 - EPA 608
 - Just for Electricians:
 - Journeyman and apprentice electricians can install and repair systems
 - Master Electricians handle more complex problems and projects and pull permits.
 - If a Master Electrician isn't doing your work, ask for master credentials within the company

- Check ratings and reviews.
 - The Better Business Bureau (BBB) is a great starting point because they usually have the most reviews, and you can assume that if a contractor is BBB accredited, they have agreed to a standard arbitration process and are more likely to take their review seriously.
 - When checking reviews on sites like Google, sort by most recent to see if there are any trends. Check lower reviews for common themes and responses from the business owner.
 - Ask contractors for recent references (within the last few months) and call them, or even visit if possible.
- Get at least three bids and lots of opinions whenever possible.
 - Ask for specifics: model numbers, performance, efficiency, and sizes on any equipment they are installing to make sure it's right for your needs. Avoid generalization of equipment in a bid.
 - Be sure to ask for information regarding warranties with equipment or workmanship warranty.
- Make sure the contractor gets any required permits and inspections.
- Consider using an independent third party for quality control inspections.

