

# Worksheet “E”

## Renovator Questions

*This worksheet will replace the original one currently on the site. Like it, the final text will be set up as two columns: **Question** and **Why This is Important**.*

Q: What is the history of your renovation company?

Experience makes a difference. Find out how and when the contractor got into the business, and how long the company has been around. Ask about the contractor’s background and relevant education and training—you want to make sure the renovator has both the technical and the business skills required to run a solid company and provide quality services. Also ask about the size of the company; some have their own staff to do the construction work while others rely on subcontractors

Q: What services do you offer?

Every contractor will provide a specific range of services. Some will include design services, while others will work with independent designers. You need to have a clear understanding of what services the contractor can provide for your project.

Q: Have you done renovations like ours before?

Some contractors specialize in specific types of projects, such as roof repairs or kitchen renovations. Others offer more general renovation services and can handle a wide range of projects. It is important to know that a contractor has experience with projects similar to yours—ask how many in the past year or two.

Q: Can we talk to your past client?

Request a list of past customers you can contact for references. Professional contractors are proud of the work they do and will be happy to provide this information. If the answer is no, stop the interview right there—never hire anyone who is not willing to give you references.

Q: Can we visit one of your current projects?

Visiting a work site can tell you a lot about how the contractor operates. If the contractor has a current project, ask to visit it and take note of details such as how well the site is organized and whether it is clean and tidy.

Q: Do you carry Workers' Compensation and liability insurance?

Hiring someone who is not properly insured could put you at considerable legal and financial risk. Professional contractors will provide you with proof of liability insurance and Workers' Compensation coverage.

Q: Will we get a written contract?

If the answer is NO, stop the interview right here. Always, always get it in writing. The contract sets out the agreement between you and the renovator in detail, from the description of the work to the actual materials to be used to the price you will pay to the responsibilities of both you and the renovator. If it's not in writing, you have no proof that you and the renovator have in fact agreed to the same thing.

Q: What warranty do you offer on your work?

A professional contractor provides you with a written warranty that spells out what is covered and for how long. And they deliver prompt follow-up service if there are problems or defects in their work. When checking references, ask past customers about the contractor's warranty service performance.

Q: How would you deal with our project?

Ask the renovator to explain how they would approach your project. Will design and working drawing be required before they are able to give you a firm price? Will they assist you in choosing products? Will they look after any needed permits? How long would the work take? When can they start? What will the schedule be like? How much will the work disrupt your household? Will they clean up? How will you pay and when? And so on...ask as many questions as you like.

At the same time, expect the renovator to try to find out as much as possible about you and the proposed project. Are they listening carefully? Taking notes? Asking the right questions? Offering ideas and suggestions?

At the end of the discussion, do you feel confident that they understand what you want and can help you accomplish it?