

# Best Practices for Choosing a Contractor

As autumn sets in, it's the perfect time to start planning for the next summer and make your home more wildfire-resistant. A crucial part of this effort is finding qualified contractors for recommended retrofits. To help you navigate this process, we've compiled a list of best practices for selecting a contractor. We strongly recommend doing your due diligence in vetting potential hires and their quality control practices before making a decision.

## **Research and Gather Recommendations**

Start by asking friends, family, and neighbors for recommendations of contractors they've worked with on similar projects. Word of mouth recommendations are usually effective, and Nextdoor is another tool residents have used with success. You can also check with professional associations like the Marin Builders Association for lists of qualified contractors in your area.

*Look for contractors with experience in retrofitting projects similar to yours. Ask about their specializations and past work.*

## **Verify Credentials and Experience**

Ensure the contractor is properly licensed and insured in your state. Ask to see proof of liability insurance and workers' compensation coverage. Look for contractors with experience in retrofitting projects similar to yours. Ask about their specializations and past work.



## **Interview Multiple Contractors**

Talk to at least three contractors and get detailed written estimates from each. This allows you to compare pricing, proposed timelines, and approaches to the project.

## **Check References and Past Work**

Ask for and contact references from previous clients. Inquire about the quality of work, adherence to timelines and budgets, and overall satisfaction. If possible, visit completed projects or current job sites to assess the quality of work and site management.

### **Get Everything in Writing**

Ensure you have a comprehensive written contract that includes:

- Detailed project scope
- Materials to be used
- Timeline with start and end dates
- Payment schedule
- Warranties or guarantee

### **Evaluate Communication and Compatibility**

Choose a contractor who communicates clearly and promptly. You'll be working closely with them, so it's important to feel comfortable and confident in your interactions.

### **Consider the Bid Carefully**

Be cautious of bids that are significantly lower than others. Look for a detailed breakdown of costs, including materials, labor, and profit margins.

By following these guidelines, you can increase your chances of finding a reliable and skilled contractor for your home retrofitting project. Remember to take your time with the selection process and trust your instincts.



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