

Before hiring a cabinet painter, use this guide and ask these questions to assess their professionalism, safety practices, and the quality of their work.

### Step One. Online Research:

Before you schedule an estimate

Oregon state law mandates that contractors must be licensed, bonded, and insured. Additionally, all employees must be on a workers compensation insurance policy if they are not named on the Oregon Construction Contractors Board (ORCCB) license as an owner. If you hire a contractor that is operating illegally you lose the ability to recover damages, and you lose the support of the ORCCB and their Dispute Resolution Service.

- Verify an active ORCCB License, Liability Insurance, and a Surety Bond at Oregon State Contractor License Search. Input the contractor's CCB # to see all the details. (Our CCB # is 164514)
- Verify an active Workers Compensation Insurance policy at Oregon DCBS Proof of Coverage Search.
- Look up their reviews by searching for company name + reviews. For example, for Pearl Painters you can simply go to Google and search "pearl painters reviews."

### Step Two. Scope of Work:

Creating clear expectations

Having a clear, written version of your project is essential. Any professional painting company should work with you to create this scope of work. This allows you to communicate your expectations to potential contractors and get comparable bids. The scope should document the following:

- Rooms or surfaces you want to be painted.
- The level of preparation needed, including repairs.
- Desired finishes, application methods, number of coats, paint brand and type, sheen level, and colors.
- Special requests or details important to you.

### Step Three. Ask Questions:

Avoid red flags

Now that you know the contractor is licensed, bonded, and insured, and you have a scope of work in hand, it's time to get into the more detailed questions that are listed to the right. It is absolutely worth it to spend the time needed to ask these questions. Any professional contractor should be confident in their answer to every single one.

- Don't be afraid to ask pointed questions.
- **If a contractor gets defensive or won't answer, don't hire them.** Move on to other bids.
- Trust your gut. This is someone you are allowing into your home and you need to be able to trust them.

## Questions to Ask Cabinet Painters

**Surface Preparation** Proper surface prep lays the foundation for a smooth, durable, and long-lasting finish on your cabinets. Improper surface prep will lead to peeling, cracking, delamination, rough surface, fish eyes, or poor coverage.

- How will you clean the cabinet surfaces prior to painting?
- What will you use to clean the surfaces and why?
- How will you address dents, chipped paint, paint that is not tightly adhered, holes, cracks, and texture issues on the cabinets? (*Mention issues specific to your cabinets.*)
- What will you do to ensure paint will stick to my current glossy cabinet surfaces?
- Do you sand? If yes, do you sand the old finish off completely? Do your sanders have HEPA vacuums to catch dust?
- Will you prime the cabinets before painting? If so, will the primer be oil- or water-based?
- Do you sand after priming and do you sand after the first coat of paint?
- Will you caulk gaps in door panels and between the crown molding and cabinet box?
- What if the caulking cracks or the paint cracks on top of the caulking?
- If you don't caulk the gaps, will you guarantee that paint won't bridge and that all gaps will be even and consistent?
- How much spot filler/bondo work do you do post-primer?
- Will you use an LED light to find flaws before you put finish coats on?
- Will I have an opportunity to inspect and approve the surface preparation before painting begins? (*We highly recommend that you require your bidder to include this in the contract.*)

**Protection Requirements** A painting contractor's protection process is vital to safeguarding your property during a project and is a clear indicator of their professionalism.

- Where will you do the spraying of cabinet doors – at my house or your shop?
- How will you protect floors, furniture, breakables, and electronics during the project?
- Do you use drop cloths or plastic sheeting to protect surfaces near the work area?
- How do you handle cleanup in the event of accidental spills or overspray?
- Do you use dust and toxic smell extraction devices?
- How do you protect my furnace and home's duct work from sanding and overspray dust?

**Paint Application** Defining paint application details with the bidder ensures proper methods, coverage, and quality. Clear expectations help avoid surprises and additional costs.

- How will you apply the paint to the cabinets (i.e. spray or hand paint)?
- If you spray the doors but hand paint the cabinet boxes, will both surfaces match in color, texture and sheen?
- How many coats of paint will you apply to the cabinets?
- Will you remove the cabinet doors or attempt to paint them in place?
- How do you know that you are applying the paint at the correct mil thickness?
- What type, brand, and sheen of paint do you recommend for my cabinets?
- What if the paint does not cover in the number of coats that you specify?
- Is there a potential for more cost if the paint does not cover in the number of coats you specify?
- How will you ensure clean, straight color transition lines between my cabinets and my walls?
- Will you get overspray on my walls, forcing me to paint my walls?
- If you do get overspray on my walls, will my wall paint stick to your cabinet paint?

**Cleanup** Detailing the cleanup process with the painting contractor ensures waste is handled properly, your property is protected, and environmental standards are met, preventing potential damage or extra costs.

- What will you do with any garbage produced?
- What do you do with leftover paint?
- Where do you clean your brushes, rollers, and spray equipment?
- What do you do with dirty solvent used to clean oil paint from brushes and sprayers?

**Payments** Clarifying the payment process with your painter ensures transparency, protects both parties, and helps prevent disputes or unexpected costs throughout the project.

- Do you require a deposit?
- Can I hold back a portion of the payment until I am satisfied with the completed job / final inspection? Will you put that in writing?

**Comparing Cost** If there is a big difference in price from one company to another, dig in and understand what's different. Then ask yourself: Am I going to be happy? Do I trust this company and their process?

- Can I see your written prep and painting process for cabinets?
- How long will my project take?
- How many workers for how many days?
- Can you provide the total hours detail so I can understand how you got to your price?
- Will my cost change if it takes longer or requires more materials than you planned for? (*Ask for this in writing!*)