

Before hiring an interior 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 Interior Painters

Surface Preparation Proper surface prep is mandatory, as it ensures that you get a durable, beautiful, long-lasting finish in your home. The specific process can vary from room to room or surface to surface.

- How will you clean the surfaces prior to painting?
- What will you use to clean the surfaces and why?
- How do you address nail pops, dents, holes, cracks and texture issues?
- What do you do to ensure paint will stick to glossy surfaces?
- Will you prime the surfaces before painting?
- If you prime, will the primer be oil- or water-based?
- Will I have an opportunity to inspect and approve the surface preparation before painting begins?

Protection Requirements How will the painting company protect your floors, carpet, furniture, and everything else inside your home? Protection goes beyond your belongings – it's also important to feel safe with strangers in your home. Understanding a painting contractor's protection process is a clear indicator of their professionalism.

- How do you protect floors, furniture, breakables, electronics, and window coverings during the project?
- What is your plan for gaining access to my home, as well as lock-up procedures?
- Where will you store your equipment?
- Where and how do you plan for brush and roller cleanup?
- What is your smoking policy?
- Which bathroom can be used or will you require a portable bathroom for the crew?

Paint Application It's important to understand the methods that painters use to apply the paint inside your home. During the bidding process, make sure that you have clear expectations in order to avoid additional costs.

- How will you apply the paint (e.g. spray, spray and back roll, or hand paint)?
- How many coats will you apply?
- What's the difference between one heavy coat and two normal coats?
- 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?
- 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 walls, ceilings, trim and floors?
- What surfaces are included and excluded from the project?

Cleanup Make sure that waste is handled correctly and cleanup is done appropriately in order to prevent potential damage or extra costs.

- What do you do with the garbage produced from my project?
- 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 / sprayers?

Payments Understanding the payment process and schedule 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 Never focus on just the price. When getting bids, you want to make comparisons based on data. Require that your bidder provides an itemized number of labor hours for each task to ensure nothing is missing from the scope. If there is a big variance in cost from one contractor to another there is likely something missing. Make sure you understand what you are getting for your money and that your eyes are wide open before you jump.

- Can I see your written prep and painting process for a project like mine?
- 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? (*Get that in writing!*)