

TOP 5 QUESTIONS to Ask a Potential Contractor



ENERGYPROS

Whether it's purchasing a new HVAC system, adding insulation, replacing a water heater, or any home energy improvement – hiring the right professional is key. You're making an investment in your home, so it's important to gauge their qualifications, experience, and suitability to your project.

Your EPB Energy ProsSM recommend that you ask potential contractors these important questions.



QUESTION 1: Are you licensed, insured, and bonded?

- **Licensed** contractors have met the necessary requirements and regulations set by the state and local authorities.
- **Insurance** is essential to protect you from liability in case of accidents or damage during the project.
- **Bonded** ensures that any harmed parties can make claims in case the contractor fails to meet their obligations.

QUESTION 2: Do you have references?

- **Talk to previous clients** to gain valuable insight into their professionalism, timeliness and quality of work.
- **Request photos** of past projects to help back up those references.
- **Perform an internet search** to see if you can find reviews and ratings for a contractor.
- **Ask how long have they been in business** to get an idea of how trusted they may be.

QUESTION 3: What kinds of calculations will you perform?

You don't want to pay for more than you need. Make sure your contractor performs the necessary calculations for right-sizing systems for your home.

- **HVAC Systems** - make sure your contractor performs a "Manual J Load Calculation" to properly determine the right size of HVAC unit. Getting a HVAC unit that's too big will cycle on and off too often, leading to wasted energy use. An HVAC that's too small will run too often. Either way, it would mean higher energy costs.
- **Ductwork** – have your contractor perform a "Manual D Calculation" to ensure proper airflow throughout your home.
- **Attic Insulation** – have your contractor tell you exactly how much insulation will be needed to achieve an "R-38 Value."
- **Water Heater** – your contractor should help you determine the right size and capacity for your particular family's needs.

QUESTION 4: Who will be my contact for the project?

Knowing who will be managing the project can help you gauge the level of supervision and communication you can expect. You also want to make sure they obtain all of the necessary permits and follow any building codes that may be required for your project. A reputable contractor will handle the permitting process on your behalf.

QUESTION 5: Will you provide a formal written contract?

Before the work begins, be sure to get a formal written contract that includes:

- **Complete project details** – with specific equipment, scope of labor, etc.
- **Estimated start and completion dates** – for each phase of your project.
- **Complete, realistic timeline** – that includes potential delays and how they handle unexpected issues.
- **Clearly-outlined payment schedule and terms** – it's common to pay in installments based on project milestones or completion of specific tasks.
- **A warranty for the products and workmanship** – a reputable contractor should stand behind their work.

Remember, open communication is key to a successful home improvement project. Don't hesitate to ask additional questions that pertain to your specific project or concerns.



Your EPB Energy Pros are here to help

Your local experts will conduct a FREE pre-inspection to help you make the smartest decisions about home energy projects. Plus, we'll come back after your contractor completes the work to ensure it was done right.

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