



30 Must Questions to Ask Your Remodeling Contractor

- 1) What separates your remodeling company from your competitors?

All general contractors use the same subcontractor pool and material suppliers resources So there is little to the claim of higher quality and better craftsmanship. You want an answer that is open and honest and actually delineates the remodelers process and customer experience.

- 2) How long have you been working in the home construction industry?

Your remodeling contractor should have at least 15 years experience in all facets of the home construction and renovation business. It is also advisable that your builder should be in business as a general contractor for a minimum of 5 years.

- 3) Do you have liability insurance and carry workman's comp insurance for your employees?

General liability and workman's compensation are essential insurances for remodelers to maintain. If your remodeler does not have these insurances and a general loss or employee accident occurs on your project, you may be found personally responsible for the expenses.

- 4) Do you have insurance in case something in my home gets broken in the renovation and/or construction process?

The contractors liability insurance should be sufficient to cover damages up to the limits of their coverage. In many cases the damage can be paid directly by the contractor to avoid the records of insurance claims on your home.



- 5) Do you belong to any professional organizations and, if so, which ones?

Belonging to a national & local building association provides another layer of credibility for the builder and provides the builder a means and method for continued education in their selected field or specialty area.

- 6) Can you provide a list of references I can contact?

Your remodeler should be able to provide you a list of 3 clients that they have served in the past. You should also request to review the remodelers portfolio and discuss their relevant renovation projects details.

- 7) Will the owner of the remodeling company be personally involved with your project?

Most builders will not actually remodel your home. They hire a project manager or a site superintendent to facilitate the actual construction. That includes the critical stages of inspecting for quality control assurance.

- 8) Will the remodeler provide you with a detailed proposal?

You should expect to receive a detailed and professionally prepared proposal. If you do not have plans or specifications, you can only expect to receive a budgetary amount and a proposal for plan design. Until the details of the design are developed can a general contractor provide you with an accurate detailed proposal. For this is a common issue when seeking competitive bids when you cannot properly compare apples for apples.

- 9) How much notice will you need to start this project?

This will provide only a little direction unless you are completely prepared to start your renovation. This is due to the commonly changing schedule climate of the remodeling business.



10) Are you willing to sign a “time and materials” contract?

You should discuss all the different contract options with your remodeling contractor. Marwood Construction believes that the customer should determine their risk aversion. Each contract method comes with a greater or lesser amount of risk for the builder and the homeowner. These risk should be openly and transparently discussed between remodeler and owner.

11) How often do you finish a project in the anticipated time schedule?

This is a question that must be qualified before directly answering. Most major renovations will take between 2 to 6 months. They are very time sensitive projects and require many of the important product selections to be made before commencing. Due to the intense nature of the remodeling project, the remodeler cannot afford to wait on late delivery of critical products. Special order selections should be ordered before remodeling work is started. When the product selections are controllable there is a very high level of confidence your project completion will meet the expected date.

12) How often will you be on site to oversee and inspect the progress of the job?

This is indeed a very relevant question. As suggested earlier, most builders do not actually renovate your home and very few will see the home during construction for the purpose of quality control. Make sure to ask them what they do when they are on site inspecting the progress.

13) How often will you stop by to check on the progress?

This is a good follow up question to the previous one.

14) Who is the on-site project manager?



As with most builders it is a good idea to learn as much as possible about the individual that will be actually remodeling your home.

15) Who will manage your project day to day?

Do not assume that someone is on site each day of construction of your home. If this is important to you we suggest a longer conversation on this concern. Make sure you are clear on who to contact for routine questions and various site inspection concerns.

16) Who will provide me with daily updates?

This is a follow up question from the previous question concerning all the players roles of the builders staff.

17) Who pulls required permits for the job, you or me?

The remodeler should submit the plans for review and be the responsible party listed on the master permit. If there is a reason you do not wish to do this, you should have a further discussion with the builder.

18) Will you write out a contract specifying what you will do?

The formal proposal, home design plans and supporting documents should maintain the specifications for building the home. The contract should provide the legal answers to why, what and when and outline the remedies for what happens if someone does not do what they promised.

19) Will you offer a guarantee on your work, and, if so, what is the guarantee?



Another good question. A guarantee is defined as a home warranty in most cases. In the state of Texas you should expect a minimum of 1 year cosmetic claims coverage, 2 years electric / mechanical / electrical claim coverage and 10 year structural claim coverage.

20) What is the daily work schedule?

This question should be answered during the pre-construction orientation with the responsible project management party on site.

21) Will I be required to move out during my renovation?

This depends on a number of factors. First if you can safely live in the home during the renovation. Secondly, can you tolerate the loss of a master bath or a kitchen during the expected time frame. The answer would be yes if either the above questions are unacceptable conditions or the renovation is so substantial that it would place you and your family in danger. Inconvenience may be acceptable, danger is not.

22) What is the payment schedule?

The payment schedule is presented based upon the project contract and special order products. On smaller projects it can commonly be 1/3 - 1/3 - 1/3. On larger projects it is common to have a project payment schedule that is based upon progress payments.

23) Will you agree to including a termination clause in the contract?

This is a proactive question. There are many types of builder contracts for different types of construction risk. You should understand that if you and your builder reach an impasse during the project, that there is a legal clause in the contract that allows you to separate with provisional conditions.



24) How does the remodeler assure you that what they design can be built within your budget?

In most cases, if the custom remodeler has designed your home renovation plans you have likely entered into a design build agreement. In this case the builder should be providing the design team a scheduled construction budget update at specified design phase intervals. These updates should provide you the confidence that your home design is still within an acceptable range provided at the beginning of the design stage.

25) What type of contracts does the remodeler offer? (Fixed Fee, Cost Plus, Time and Materials, other?)

Marwood Construction believes that the customer should determine their risk aversion. Each of these contract methods come with a greater or lesser amount of risk for the builder and the homeowner. These risk should be openly and transparently discussed between builder and owner.

26) Have you been involved with any legal disputes following a previous job?

This is a good question to test the honesty and integrity of your builder early in the process. If in fact there are legal actions that have been taken, there will likely be a public record of them filed with the County Clerk's Recorders Office.

27) How do we resolve disputes?

This is a great direct question. Your builder should have a system and answer for escalating issues concerning your displeasure with your homes construction.

28) How quickly will you return my phone calls or emails?



This is a good question to establish the owners expectations for how they can expect to do business with their general contractor. There should be a routine call response and a response condition for more urgent needs.

29) What specific steps does the remodeler take to keep your home, possessions, and the jobsite clean and safe daily, weekly, and at the end of the project?

This is an important question, due in principle that many more injuries happen on a cluttered and disorganized job site then on a clean orderly site. This is especially relevant if the owner is paying for the builders risk policy that the lender will require.

30) How does the remodeler handle home security?

Project safety should be discussed in detail during the pre-construction orientation. The conditions for access to the home are widely different for occupied homes versus non - occupied. The conditions and procedures should be clearly outlined by your remodeler.