Hiring Home Contractor

Have you ever had a problem with a home contractor? You're not alone. A friend of mine paid over seven thousand dollars to have his roof repaired, only to have it leak the next time it rained. The contractor made excuses, but never did a thing about it – and my friend was an attorney! To make situations like this less likely, avoid the following mistakes when hiring a contractor.1. Not being clear about what you want. When you don't know what you want, you might not like what you get. If you change your mind and change the job halfway through, the contract – and price – will change. Hint: it won't get cheaper. Be clear on what you want done.2. Not getting it in writing. Hearing "I didn't say I was going to include the gutters," could be a problem, or you could point to the contract.3. No dates in the contract. Do you want the job finished this year? Be sure you have it in the contract.4. Too much money up front. Deposits are a reasonable request when contracts are signed. The home contractor may need money for materials prior to the start date. But never pay in full before the job is finished.5. Unlicensed contractors. This can be okay, if you know what you are doing (and he does). A license doesn't mean you get expertise, but it does mean you get leverage. Contractors will right their wrongs to avoid losing that license.6. Hiring the first in the phone book. Talk to friends who had work done, or to the owner of a hardware store. Get a recommendation based on a similar job to yours.7. Assuming there will be no problems. Delays due to weather, employees quitting, and more will happen. A few problems is okay, but it's not okay if the contractor can't work out the issues to your satisfaction.8. Expecting neatness. Guess what? It is sometimes more efficient to leave things laying where they'll next be used. There will be messes, so prepare accordingly. Cover up things if it will be a dusty job, for example. Also be clear in the contract that the jobsite will be cleaned up at the end of the job.9. No penalties in the contract. It's one thing for a contract to say "Work to be completed by May 2nd." That helps, but it's better to add, "$100 per day to be deducted from the contract price for each day the job is *best power washing in Commack* unfinished beyond May 2nd. It's what I call a motivational clause.10. Thinking contracts eliminate problems. Contracts help, but unreasonable people on either side of a contract can ignore them, or even use "literal readings" to make things worse. Find a home contractor you can work with, and keep your eyes open.

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