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California homeowners spend millions of dollars each year on construction projects such as adding a new bathroom, repairing a foundation, framing, wall installation, upgrading a kitchen, creating a home office, building a deck, and re-roofing. While some homeowners prefer to do the work themselves, many construction and remodeling jobs will require hiring either a general building contractor or specialized contractor. A contractor manages the entire project from start to finish, including architectural planning, securing any required building permits, as well as providing all of the materials, equipment and labor that will be needed.

Under state law, a contractor bidding on a job valued at $500 or more must by licensed by the Contractors State License Board (CSLB). The CSLB licenses contractors in 43 different classifications, including general contractors who manage projects involving two or more subcontractors, and specialized contractors such as:

Â· Framing and Rough Carpentry Contractor

Â· Concrete Contractor

Â· Drywall Contractor

Â· Electrical Contractor

Â· Fencing Contractor

Â· Landscaping Contractor

Â· Masonry Contractor

Â· Plumbing Contractor

Â· Roofing Contractor

Â· Solar Contractor

The qualifications for a contractorâ€™s license include 4 years of journey-level trade experience, passing a trade and license law examination and posting a license bond.

When hiring a contractor, always ask to see his or her pocket license. Also verify that the contractor is insured and carries workersâ€™ compensation. If you hire a contractor that doesnâ€™t have workersâ€ compensation, you are legally considered the employer, and can be held accountable for any job-related injuries. Once you have verified that the contractor is licensed and insured, ask for references. Hearing what former clients have to say about the work that was performed can be extremely helpful when deciding who to hire.

Another step in the hiring process is to ensure that all of the details regarding the job are written out. This includes a complete description of the work that will be done, any necessary permits, what materials and equipment will be needed, the cost of the job, schedule of payments, and when the job will begin and end. Make sure you get clarification on any terms in the agreement that you are unfamiliar with.

Depending on the type and extent of your construction project or home remodel, hiring a contractor to perform the work can save you time and money. A general building contractor will know who to hire when the project involves specialized skills, such as plumbing, electrical or masonry, and will manage all aspects of the job. Both general and specialized contractors will also know the building codes that need to be followed, and what permits to pull. If you are uncertain about the type of work that may be needed, such as the best way to repair a foundation, professional help can be critical and will ensure the job is done properly.

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