

PATIOS & DECKS: QUESTIONS FOR PROS

Big or small, your project is a significant investment. That's why we recommend interviewing at least three qualified contractors before making a hiring decision. Ask the following questions to determine whether a pro is the right fit for your project:

Do you offer design services?

Hiring a pro that offers design services may save you some time and money up front, though you can also hire an independent design consultant to draw up your plans.

What is your experience with projects like mine?

Less experienced pros may be qualified to complete simple deck and patio projects. But large, multi-story and multi-material projects will require the expertise of a more experienced builder. You're making a big investment, so you'll want to work with someone who's done this before.

Are you licensed and insured?

Proper licensing and insurance will not only give you peace of mind that you're working with a qualified professional, but it will also provide safeguards in case anything goes wrong with your project.

Are you familiar with local building code and permitting requirements?

A good contractor will know whether specific permitting and siting requirements will apply to your project. If they don't know off-hand, they should propose to do the research and get back to you.

Do you offer any warranties or guarantees?

Most engineered materials manufacturers will offer a warranty on their products — particularly when they're professionally installed by a manufacturer-authorized contractor. And some contractors will guarantee their own work for a specified period following installation.

Can I get a contract and all change orders in writing?

Be sure that your contractor is willing to sign a contract up front, and that they are also willing to require all change orders to be approved by both parties prior to implementation.

Do you have a website where I may view photos and reviews from past customers?

A good website will offer a quick and easy way to see whether the contractor's style is well aligned with your own.

May I speak with a few former clients? Or, better yet, may I tour a few of your past projects in person?

Pictures help, but going to see a project in person will give you a first-hand look at the quality of a contractor's projects. Be sure to ask these questions of former clients:

Were you happy with the work of this pro?

Would you use this contractor again?

Were there any unexpected costs or delays?

Would you recommend this contractor to friends and family?

Ready to start your project? Go to [HomeAdvisor.com](https://www.homeadvisor.com) to find a pro today!
