

# 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:

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- 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!

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