

Signs of a Professional Remodeler

NAHB Remodelers™ Council

Founded in 1982,
the NAHB

Remodelers™ Council is the recognized voice of the remodeling industry.

Members of the Council have forged an extensive program of education and information to aid remodelers in all facets of their businesses and to improve professionalism in the remodeling industry.

Membership in the NAHB Remodelers™ Council indicates a remodeler's commitment to professional-quality construction that meets or exceeds industry standards and practices, responsible business management, and reliable customer and warranty service.

NAHB remodelers have access to business and technical information; assistance from staff professionals who are experts in a variety of disciplines from accessibility to zoning; and training and education programs for increasing business, technical, and communication skills.

Certified Graduate Remodeler™

Certified Graduate Remodeler™ The designation, Certified Graduate Remodeler™ (CGR), indicates that a remodeler has completed the requirements of the CGR professional credentials program sponsored by the NAHB Remodelers™ Council. These requirements include educational credits and certain prescribed standards of business experience and practices. If your remodeler's name bears the CGR designation, you can be assured that he or she measures up to the best remodelers in the country.

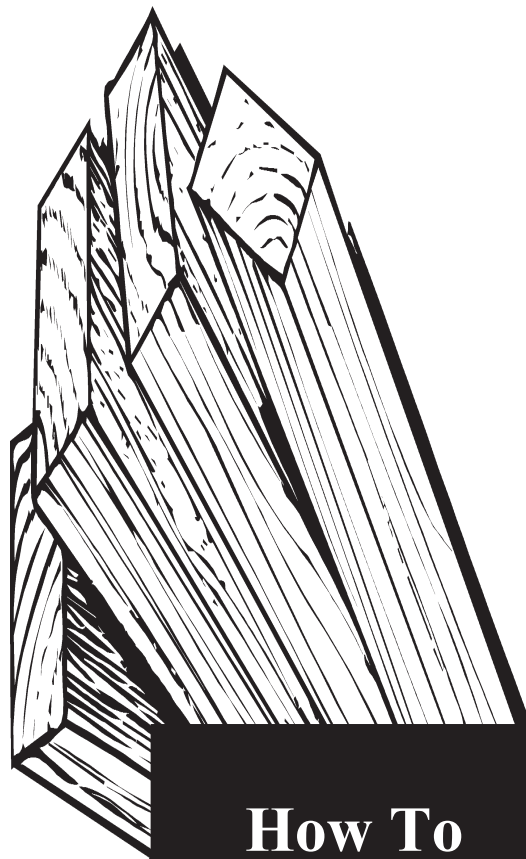
**For Further Information, Contact -
Housing and Building Association
(719) 592-1800**

www.cshba.com



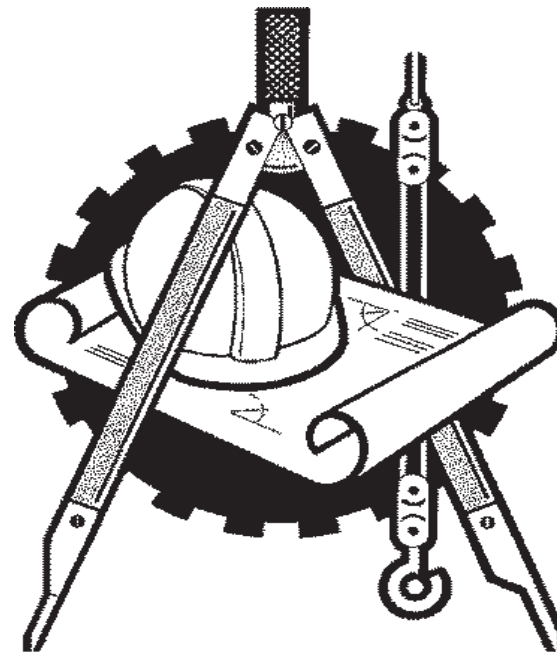
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How To Find A Professional Remodeler

If you own a home, no matter what its age, sooner or later you may join the millions of people who remodel their homes each year. The reasons for remodeling are as varied as the projects themselves. Generally people choose remodeling to add comfort, convenience, space, and ultimately to enhance their investment in what may be their most valuable asset.



If you are considering a remodeling project, this brochure will tell you how to find a professional remodeler among the many contractors who seek your business. Your home is too important to entrust to anyone but a professional remodeler who can –

- Save you money by doing your job right the first time.
- Ensure that your dreams are accurately translated into reality by offering design services in-house or through an arrangement with a professional architect or designer.
- Understand that your comfort during the project and its successful completion depend on effective communication and follow-through.
- Maintain a safe and reasonably neat jobsite to prevent damage to your home or injury to household members and pets.
- Provide the best possible materials within your budget.
- Ensure your job meets or exceeds applicable building codes and regulations.
- Guarantee the quality of the work with a warranty.
- Respond promptly to service calls and inquiries.

Before You Meet with A Remodeler

- Develop an idea of what you want to do. Write a prioritized list of your needs and wants. Look at magazines and collect pictures of what you like. (The more clearly you can envision the project and describe it on paper, the more likely you are to convey a clear image of your project to a professional remodeler.)
- Think about traffic patterns, furniture placement, colors, lighting, and how you want to use the remodeled space.
- Figure out how much money you have to spend on the remodeling job, the furnishings, and the landscaping (if any). If necessary, talk to lenders and find out how much you can borrow.
- For tips on where to look for ideas for a remodeling job refer to *Remodeling Your Home: An Insider's Guide* (available from Home Builder Press). This book explains how to prepare for the remodeling process and how to work with your remodeler to make your job go more smoothly.

Begin the Search

Seek referrals from –

- Friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, and others who have had remodeling work done
- Independent trade contractors, building materials suppliers, architects, engineers, home inspectors, and local lenders
- Local trade associations, such as your area's local home buildings association and local Remodelers™ Council.

Check with your local or state office of consumer protection and the local Better Business Bureau (if the remodeler you are considering is a member). Have they had any complaints about the remodeler? If so, were those complaints resolved?

Check with your state's licensing agency and the state and local building inspectors to see if they have received any complaints about the remodeler and to verify that the remodeler has the appropriate license(s).

What to Look for and What to Ask?

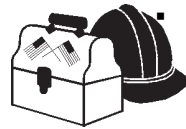
When you hire a remodeler, you are buying a service rather than a product. The quality of the service the remodeler provides will determine the quality of the finished project and your satisfaction with it. Listed below are some qualifications you will want to explore and questions you will want to ask when you interview a remodeler.

Business Experience and Management

Does the remodeler –

- ✓ **Maintain a permanent mailing address, a phone number, and a pager or answering system?** (You will want to be able to reach the remodeler quickly and easily – especially at critical times.)
- ✓ **Carry insurance that protects you from claims arising from property damage or jobsite injuries?**
 - Ask for a copy of insurance certificates so you can be sure you will not be liable in these situations for property damage or jobsite-related injuries.
 - Ask how much the project will add to your home's value and obtain the necessary additional insurance.
- ✓ **Have an established presence in the community:**
 - How long has the company been in business? (Longevity suggests financial stability.)
 - Does the remodeler maintain solid relationships with experienced independent trade contractors (such as plumbers and electricians) and work with them as a team to keep your job running smoothly?
- ✓ **Possess a trustworthy reputation among customers, peers, and people involved in all aspects of the industry?**
 - Ask for a list of building materials suppliers and call them to see if the remodeler has an account or pays for materials on delivery. (Most suppliers are willing to extend credit to financially sound companies.)

- ✓ **Actively participate in a trade organization such as the Remodelers™ Council of the National Association of Home Builders? These organizations help to keep their members informed about new products, construction techniques, business practices, and industry issues. Participation demonstrates a remodeler's commitment to professionalism and the remodeling industry. Through certification programs, these organizations confer designations such as Certified Graduate Remodeler™ (CGR), Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist™ (CAPS), Certified Bath Designer (CBD), or Certified Kitchen Designer (CKD) to those who meet the requirements.**
 - How long has the remodeler you are considering been a member?
 - Has the remodeler earned a designation?



Construction and Technical Expertise

Does the remodeler –

- **Have a working knowledge of the many types and ages of homes in the area. (Knowing what is likely to be behind a wall or under a floor helps the remodeler to provide reliable estimates. An extremely low bid may indicate lack of experience and an inability to later cover the actual costs involved in the job.)**
 - What products and materials would the remodeler be likely to use for your project?
 - Does the remodeler offer an array of options and thus demonstrate knowledge of and experience with a variety of products, materials, and techniques?
- **Specialize in particular types of projects?**
- **Arrange for the building permit? (The person who obtains the permit is the contractor of record and therefore liable for the work.)**
- **Offer a warranty? If so, what kind and for how long? What is covered under the warranty and what is not?**
- **Agree to begin and complete your job within a written timetable?**

Customer Service and Communication

Does the remodeler –

- **Respond promptly to your inquiries?**
- **Emphasize service and developing a trusting relationship with you?**
- **Listen to and understand your needs and wants and work with you to ensure that the plans accurately reflect your expectations?**
 - When you discuss your written priorities, does the remodeler show enthusiasm for your ideas and suggest ways to make them work within your budget?
 - Ask the remodeler for examples of how the company has solved similar space problems for other customers.
- **Facilitate communication among all parties involved in the project?**
 - Will the remodeler provide you with schedule updates so you can make appropriate decisions and prepare for any unavoidable inconveniences?
 - Ask how the company handles communications during the construction phase of the job, such as a message center in the house for communication between you and the remodeling team – including the independent trade contractors.

Interview Previous or Present Customers

Before you sign a contract –

- **Ask to share names and phone numbers of customers with you.**
 - Ask to see jobs similar to yours.
 - Does the quality of work meet your standards?
- **Ask the homeowners –**
 - Would you hire this company again?
 - Did the remodeler maintain a reasonably neat jobsite, provide regular broom clean-up and haul away debris including personal trash such as lunch sacks?

- Did the remodeler keep labor and materials delays to a minimum so that your job could be started and completed on time and within budget?
- Did you find the remodeler easy to talk to and did the remodeler keep you informed as the job progressed?



Make the Decision

- **Ask yourself if you feel comfortable with the remodeler and confident that this company will do the work according to your plans, budget, and specifications.**
- **If you are satisfied with the answers to your questions, ask for a written estimate of the work to be done based on a set of plans and specifications. Be prepared to pay for this package. If the estimated cost of the project is more than you can afford, see if you can trim something from the project or postpone part of it so you can still work with a professional remodeler.**
- **Ask the remodeler to explain the plans and specifications and company procedures to you. (For instance, how does the company handle changes to the initial design, choice of materials, or schedule once construction begins?)**
- **If you compare your estimate with another, be sure each one is based upon the same set of plans, specifications, and scope of work. If your remodeler suggests any deviations, ask the remodeler to present them as options.**
- **Find out whether the remodeler uses a detailed, written contract that protects both of you and that complies with local, state, and federal laws. The contract must spell out the work that will and will not be performed.**
- **Select the remodeler with a track record of a variety of excellent projects and plenty of experience with your type of project. Remember, low price alone does not ensure a successful remodeling experience.**