



Things to Consider

When hiring a General Contractor.

- **Are they a licensed contractor/company?** You can easily find out about a contractor or a companies license by calling the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department at (719) 327-2880 and giving them either the contractors name, or the companies name. Everlasting Victorians carries the highest residential license through the International Code Council (ICC) and has their local license to operate within El Paso County. Another critical red flag to look for when selecting a contractor relates to their license and insurance, **MAKE SURE THE LICENSE THEY SHOW YOU IS IN THEIR NAME!** Many people in town sell jobs in their names but they aren't licensed or insured and sub the work out to another company. **THIS PUTS YOU AT MAJOR RISK!** Your warranty and liability is with the company you signed a contract through and if they aren't licensed or insured for the work you will have them do then who will take responsibility if something happens to the workers or to your home during the project? You think they will? Absolutely not! Make sure that the company you sign a contract with is the company listed on the building license, listed on the insurance and the company that will be pulling the permits. **BEWARE OF DOOR TO DOOR SALES** offering free wet bars and promoting that someone will win a free basement. These are complete scams. Anyone going door to door to push people into using them cannot be trusted, no ifs ands or buts about it. Use reputable people with reputable referrals that are recent pertinent to your project.
- **Apples for Apples!** I want to point out firstly that in this industry more than most **YOU ABSOLUTELY WILL GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR!** I want to be absolutely clear about this because this ties into a very important question you should ask before having any company come out to your home: "Am I just wanting the cheapest price, or is functionality and quality more important?" Getting a cheap price is easy, just buy cheap material and hire inexperienced people at an hourly rate to finish your project. However, if you are like me, and like most people, you want your project done tastefully and by experienced professionals who will make it look better than any expectation you may have already had. Like many people say, never go for the cheapest price because many times that company is just underbidding the project to get their foot in the door and 9 times out of 10 their price is sure to go up. Similarly you may be cautious going with the highest price because that is often an indicator that the company may be unfamiliar with the project and they are adding a lot of extras to the project out of a lack of experience knowing how to bid the project. It is always good to have at least 3 companies come out for your project. This way, you can get a feel for what is out there and also get different ideas for your project that you may have overlooked. Presentation is everything! If the contractor is late to your appointment without the courtesy to call, it is pretty safe to say that communication through the project and completing punctually is out the door.
- **What is in their estimate?** Do you get a breakdown on what the estimate actually comes with (example \$100/ light, \$500 allowance for the vanity)? This is huge because how will you know what kind of materials and what

quality of materials are going to be used unless you can see it first or get an idea on an allowance prior to signing a contract? KNOW WHAT YOUR PAYING FOR!

- **Are they pulling permits?** How do you know they are pulling permits? This is a very easy but very important answer. You can simply go to the building departments website at www.pprbd.org and search “permits” under your address and see what permits were pulled and if they were signed off. We, at Everlasting Victorians, will sit down with you and review the building departments website under your specific permit and show that all permits are satisfied before any final payments are made. In many cases, we visit homeowners that were under the impression their basements were permitted, only to find out upon selling the home that no permits were even issued, so this is a very important question to ask in today’s economy.
- **Do they offer a fixed price guarantee?** Is there something in the contract that states specifically that the “price is not subject to change”? Price gouging is the biggest fraud in the construction industry, where companies “get their foot in the door” and just keep marking the price up as you go. At the end of the job you realize you paid 40% (hypothetical) more than the estimate and there is legally nothing you can do if it doesn’t specifically state in the contract that the price will not go up in some form or fashion. Everlasting Victorians’ contracts specifically acknowledge that the price will not change under any circumstances. If we miss something that regional requires...its on us. Another point to make is that you do get what you pay for, even more so in this industry than any. When you receive an estimate that is significantly less than the rest, the thing you need to ask yourself is why? Compare apples for apples with all of your estimates to make sure you are receiving everything you want before selecting a contractor. We are a custom home builder that caters to each customers’ needs individually. We always caution homeowners from the “fly by nighters” or “handyman” services, who really just need some work and try and get it wherever they can. Not to say they won’t do a good job, but if they don’t do this full time, it is pretty safe to assume they may not be the best suited to complete the task in the way you envisioned or the way regional requires. Lastly, make sure whomever you use has an established portfolio of clients, specifically pertaining to that specific need you have, showing they do this often and are very well represented.
- **Do they do Quality Work?** A simple indicator on many companies level of service and quality of work can easily be determined through their referral list. If they offer just a general list, jobs not pertaining to your project they’re bidding and nothing recent, you should be a little hesitant. Ask for a progressive referral list of ongoing clients and recent projects to speak with the homeowners on what level of service and craftsmanship was provided. Another great tool is the internet. Check on websites like Angieslist.com, bbb.org and google reviews for customer feedback on the company. Many times that is all you need to see if they are a right fit for what you are looking for.
- **Do they uphold any warranty?** Do they provide good customer service? The reason we put these two questions together is because they are synonymous to each other. We have found that a company that has poor customer service is slow to respond to questions, emails or even estimates will most likely be even slower to respond, yet alone fix, any warranty issues you may have. Our lead time for estimates is 3 business days and we are always here and in direct communication throughout the project. If ever you were to speak to any of our clients, the first thing they will acknowledge is how responsive we are with any problems, questions or concerns. We are very well rooted in Colorado and are going to be here for years to come thanks to the constant support of our many great clients and their efforts to see to it that people see the difference we provide. After all, our motto is “Quality that stands the test of time...”, and we will hold to that no matter how big or small the project is.

- **How long have they been in business?** If a contractor has been in business for several years, they should have an extensive list of testimonials from past clients. Reviews are crucial to get an understanding of your potential contractor's work ethic, craftsmanship, and professionalism. We're excited to be featured on Zillow.com in the Colorado Springs area! Be sure to read our reviews to get a feel for our quality of work. Thanks for reading.
- **What is being said about them online?:** With the internet being so easily available for a plethora of information, I would challenge you to do your homework on any company you are considering hiring and truly find out what is being said about them online. Google, yahoo, bing, angies list, and the BBB are all good sources to see what has been said about a company or what "rating" they have with different consumers. The other very important thing this will elaborate on is what area of expertise that individual company has. For example, if you are requesting them to finish a basement and all the reviews you can find on them are related to bathroom and kitchen remodeling that should be a red flag. You should expect to find a decent amount of reviews all pertaining to your project which would give you the assurance that this is something they do often and are acknowledged for their work.