

The Top 11 Questions You MUST Ask Your Builder Before Renovating Your Home

Making changes to your home is a massive investment of your time, money and mental wellbeing.

Checking in with your builder before the first hammer is swung is a great way to set expectations for your project and put your mind at ease.



Here are the top 11 questions you should ask your builder before you renovate.

Are you a Licensed Building Practitioner?

If your building work includes specific designs relating to structure or weather tightness, you will need a Licensed Building Practitioner (LBP) to carry out these works. This type of building work is considered “Restricted Building Work” and needs to be signed off by your local council.

By holding a licence and being a LBP, your builder will be able to carry out and supervise any restricted building work, in accordance with council regulations and approvals.

Are you a Master Builder?

If your builder is a member of Master Builders, it means they are a member of New Zealand’s leading building and construction industry association.

To qualify as a member, they must have building experience, trade and professional qualifications, on-site management experience, workmanship and financial stability.

Choosing to use a Master Builder means that you are choosing quality. To give you further peace of mind, a master builder can offer you the Master Builder’s 10-year Guarantee on completed residential work.

Who will be working on my house?

It is important that you and your family feel comfortable with the people in and around your home, get to know the team that will be working on your project before making any decision.

Find out more about Build Firm [here](#).



Does everything need to be decided before we start, or can I make changes during the build?

The short answer is no.

While major changes should be avoided, they can be done during your build with council and architect involvement.

Smaller changes can often be accommodated but might affect your initial quote.

When reviewing the quotes you get back from builders, pay special attention to any "allowances" or "sums". These are often called "PC" sums, which stands for Prime Cost or Provisional Sums. These are monetary allowances, however they are subject to changes such as lack of detail, information or design choices. An example of this would be carpet or tile choices.

Who will be project managing my build? How will I reach out with any queries?

To ensure best outcomes and avoid mishaps, communication is key. Find out how this will be achieved (phone, email, text) and with whom you will be communicating.

What are some ways to keep costs down but still achieve a high quality build?

As each project is unique, the best way to go about cost savings is to talk to your builder. They will be able to work together with you to find options that will suit your needs, while saving time and money.

However, as a rule, the easiest way to keep costs down is to not make any changes once the project has started.



How will my deposit be handled and paid back?

A job deposit is often held by the builder until the final payment is received. It is then often deducted from the final bill with anything remaining refunded back to you.

Companies can hold deposits in various ways, with some even offering to place your funds in separate trust bank accounts so you can still earn interest!

What insurance and home warranties do you offer?

While some work is covered by standard warranties, your builder might be able to offer additional insurance and warranties in the unlikely event that things don't go to plan.

What other benefits do you offer your clients?

Some builders provide incentives for choosing them, such as a dinner voucher or a free commercial clean at the end of the build.

See if there are other benefits for choosing a builder over another, instead of just comparing final price tags.

Can you provide me with references or testimonials from previous clients?

Doing some research and getting some first hand feedback on how your builder operates will give you a true sense of their integrity and skill.

Just like hiring an employee and checking their references, doing the same with a builder will give you social proof they are who they say they are.



Finally, the last question you should ask your builder is...

How will payments be processed? What charges can I expect? What type of contract is better for my project, fixed price or charge up?

When it comes to the nitty gritty questions, don't be shy. Get all the important price related questions out on the table early.

Payment terms need to work for everyone, so determining what this means for you early can avoid wasted time for all parties involved.

To learn more about Build Firm and how we would answer these questions, check out our



Have a question?

Contact Us



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