

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a person in a grey t-shirt and blue jeans kneeling on a light-colored wooden floor. The person is working on a flooring project. In the foreground, there is a yellow and black power tool, a white bottle of wood glue with a green cap, and a blue hose. The floor is made of light-colored wood planks, and some planks are being laid out in a herringbone pattern. The bottom of the image has a teal gradient overlay where the text is located.

5 QUESTIONS
YOU SHOULD CONSIDER
BEFORE HIRING YOUR NEXT
FLOORING CONTRACTOR

1. Are They a Good Listener?

Many contractors are quick to tell you what they think before taking the time to understand what you really want. Outside of your initial impression, the estimate should provide a good indication of how well the contractor listened to your needs. Here's a couple of things to consider.

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- Is the contract detailed enough to clearly define the complete scope of work and provide full understanding of what you are purchasing? This will indicate whether or not the contractor has a comprehensive understanding of what you are trying to accomplish.
- Look out for the change-order game causing continuous changes or uncontrolled growth in a project's scope, also known as **scope creep**. There are times when the scope will change due to issues discovered during the process or you (the customer) may request additions to the scope. However, asking upfront what potential problems could arise will help to eliminate scope creep and the need for change orders.

2. Do They Have Credentials and Reputation?

Look for a contractor who submits to the higher standards and accountability of organizations like the NWFA (National Wood Flooring Associations) and NARI (National Association of The Remodeling Industry). You can be confident members of these organizations are experienced, use proven processes, and have a record of success. In addition to being a member of the NWFA and NARI, it's important to look at a company's reputation. The following is a list of ways to learn more about a company.



- **Ask for references.** Getting a referral or recommendation from a current or past customer is a good way to verify the quality of work.
- **Read reviews.** It's ok if a company has few bad reviews. Look to see if they are responding to those reviews and seeking to address the concerns. Don't be afraid to ask the company if you are concerned about a review you read. There is always more to the story.
- **Ask them to share their company story.** There is much to be learned from their story. How long have they been in business? How did they get into the industry? What training have they received? What is their passion behind how and why they do business?
- **See for yourself.** Take a look at their past work. View an online portfolio through their website, facebook, and instagram for example. Or, if possible, visit a past job.

3. Do They Compromise Quality?

Many times customers are unaware this is happening until you begin to experience issues with your floor.

- **Quality Materials.** The performance and longevity of your floor will be affected by the materials used. Clarify the materials, such as wood, stain, or finish in order to ensure you're getting the quality you are expecting. A lower priced bid could indicate the use of lesser quality material, so take this into account when considering the lowest bid.
- **Work Force.** Are they using in-house certified labor or sub contractors? Companies with an in-house trained workforce are typically able to have more control over the quality of work. These employees are usually provided with continuing education, workers compensation, and other employee benefits to retain the highest trained professionals. Look for a company with crew leaders who have the technical training and certifications through the NWFA.
- **Technical Knowledge and Documentation.** Your contractor must possess the expertise to not only thoroughly assess the job site but also understand how their findings will affect your floor. Below are two primary categories to assess.
 1. **Environmental Conditions** - Moisture content readings of your floor and relative humidity in the house should be measured and documented. These environmental factors will affect the flooring materials and long term performance of your floor.
 2. **Subfloor** - The subfloor should be inspected carefully for any leveling issues, movement, objectionable noises, delamination or damaged areas of the subflooring material.
- **Job Site Preparation** is crucial. Based upon the finds of the jobsite evaluation, the proper preparation will help prevent future problems such as cupping, cracking, gapping, buckling and warping. Subfloor prep and/or moisture issues must be addressed before any flooring work begins. Proper preparation will decrease the possibility of the floor having any issues in the future.

4. Do They Offer A Guarantee?

The company should be able to provide written documentation outlining their warranty. This could be a separate document or stated on their service contract. A standard warranty would be (1) year following the completion of work and include materials and workmanship.

5. Do They Honor The Invitation Into Your Home?

At Totta Hardwoods, our "Common Courtesy" promise is to respect your home by maintaining a safe environment for your family. Here are ways contractors can respect you and your home.

- Using a GREENGUARD air certified standard finishing system to ensure low chemical emissions. This makes the home or work space safe to remain occupied while the work is performed.
- The use of high-powered dust containment vacuums that minimize dust during the sanding process.
- Ask permission and engage you on what makes you comfortable with them in your home?
- Make every effort to prevent any damage to existing home furnishings. This will minimize the need for minor touch-ups.

YOU SHOULD BE PROUD OF YOUR HOME.

Many homeowners are embarrassed by their floors, keeping them from enjoying their home. Totta Hardwoods creates beautiful floors that will give you the confidence to host those special occasions and never miss life's precious moments.

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