



At Home on Cape Cod

Herbie's Tips & Trends from the
Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Cape Cod

What You Should Know about Hiring a Remodeler

With the ongoing challenging economy, many families are choosing to remodel their homes to fit their changing needs, rather than selling their home and buying another one. Your home is likely your largest investment, and even simple remodels can cost hundreds or thousands of dollars, so you want to make sure you find a contractor you can trust.

As the home building and remodeling industry celebrates National Remodeling Month in May, here are some important considerations to ensure you make the right decisions when you find, evaluate and hire a remodeler.

The best place to start is with your local Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Cape Cod (HB&RACC) at www.capecodbuilders.org by calling 508-398-3900. Using a professional remodeler who will maintain the highest professional and ethical standards in the industry will ensure the success of your project. The Home Builders Association can also help you find a remodeler who specializes in a specific type of remodeling if you need it, such

as a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) to help modify your home to better suit you as you age, or a Certified Green Professional (CGP) to make your home more energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly.

You should also ask for referrals from friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, and others who have had remodeling work done. Or, ask local independent trade contractors, building materials suppliers, architects, engineers, home inspectors, lenders and insurance professionals for recommendations.

There are also websites where consumers leave comments about their experience with local businesses, such as www.yelp.com, www.angieslist.com and www.kudzu.com. But be careful about these sources of information, you have no way of knowing who left the comment or if they were honest.

Once you have a list of potential home remodelers for your project, do research to verify that they are appropriately licensed and



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have a good business track record. Look them up with your local or state office of consumer protection and the local Better Business Bureau, as well as with your state's licensing agency and the state and local building inspectors. Verify that the remodeler has the appropriate licenses and registrations, and see if they have received any complaints about the remodeler and if so, were those complaints resolved satisfactorily? The Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Cape Cod can help you with these searches.

When you begin meeting with remodelers, you want to find out information such as:

- How long they have been in business in your community? Can they provide references from customers and suppliers they work with?
- Do they carry insurance that protects you from claims arising from property damage or job site injuries? Ask for a copy of the insurance certificates.
- What is their working knowledge of the many types and ages of homes in the area, and what sort of issues could arise?
- Do they arrange for the building permit? (The person who obtains the permit is the contractor of record and therefore liable for the work)
- Do they provide a written estimate before beginning the work, and a detailed contract that spells out the work that will and will not be performed, protects both of you, provides a fair payment schedule contract and complies with local, state, and federal laws?
- Do they offer a warranty? What is covered under the warranty and for how long?

For more detailed checklists for finding, evaluating and working with a remodeler, as well as other information about remodeling your home, visit capecodbuilders.org.

