

# Deck Bid Topics - A Quick Reference



## ✓ Licenses, Permits and Inspections

- Look up your potential contractor at <http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/LicenseLookup/> and **be on the lookout for complaints.**
- Make sure the company will be filing for permits and calling for inspections on your project.

## ✓ Insurance for Property and People

- Ask to verify coverage with their insurance company. **Do this before signing a contract, if possible, but definitely before any work is started.**
- Ask about workers' compensation insurance specifically.

## ✓ Vet The Experience of Your Contractor

- Ask how long the company has been building decks specifically, **or how many deck projects they have completed.**
- Ask for references from customers in your area or with similar projects.
- Ask them to tell you about the crew that will be installing your deck; **ask how many decks they have built together.**

## ✓ What Materials and Why

- Ask "What are the brand names of the materials you use?" and then compare their answers to the answers you get from other contractors or information you find online.
- Ask "Why do you use this brand of material in particular?"

## ✓ Understand the Builder's Warranties:

To know how the company you hire will handle defective materials ask:

- "How does your warranty process work?"
- "Tell me about a time you had to replace something under warranty?"
- "What happens if the materials end up bowing or warping?"
- "What happens if the materials used on my project are defective?"

## ✓ A Fair Contract with Specifics:

- Ask, "Can I see the full terms of your contract before hiring you?" **Never assume good faith; get it in writing.**
- Ask: "What are the payment terms for the project?" **Be on the lookout for red flags**, like a company that only works in cash, requires more than half of the payment upfront, or asks for your final payment before the project is completed.
- Know what would require a change in the written agreement and/or the final cost. **Require notification before they do any work that would change how much you are charged.**
- **Make sure that you understand what the wording of the contract means.** This helps you avoid getting lured into a lower upfront cost and being nickel and dimed into a higher price tag.