

FINDING THE RIGHT CONTRACTOR FOR THE JOB

10 Questions You Must Ask Your Electrical Contractor Before You Commit.

When you bring an electrical contractor into your facility, you need to know that the contractor you will use is qualified, properly licensed and trained, and capable of performing mission critical operational tasks. Productivity is the most important element you bring to your organization, ensuring that everything is on, working properly and working efficiently – always.

Energy management and electrical contracting are two of the most important aspects of an operation – because when the power is off, nothing is online – except your reputation. When evaluating your commercial electrical contractor, ask them the following:

1. Does the company sell on price alone?

The lowest price is not necessarily the lowest cost. A trouble-free installation without the need for repeated follow-up can easily save the cost differential of using a quality contractor who did it right the first time. Your time is valuable.

2. Is the company licensed?

Hiring an unlicensed contractor means running the risk that you could be working with someone who is unfamiliar with the latest changes in National Electric Code and may not even be legally able to do business in your area. Be sure and double check that the company you plan on working with as well as the electrician performing the job are licensed.

3. Does the company guarantee its products and services? What specifically does it cover, and what is the duration?

Be wary of some contractors who offer only a limited one-year guarantee. Many businesses will claim their work is 'guaranteed' but it's important to ask the specific terms. Do they guarantee their service or just the parts provided?

4. Does the company have an established track record of over 5 years industry experience?

80% of electrical contractors are out of business within 3 years. By using a business without an established track record, you could risk not having your job completed. Or worse yet, not have anyone to uphold the guarantee of performing warranty work – after all, a 10 year guarantee is only as good as the company guaranteeing the work.

5. Does the company have public liability insurance that protects your company from any accident, damage or contractor injury that may happen on your property?

Many contractors carry \$0 to \$300,000 of insurance. Any amount of damage over this could be your responsibility. Make sure you ask.

6. Does the contractor train their employees through a Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training certified program?

Properly trained personnel are essential in installing and servicing today's electronic equipment. Without properly trained installers/repairmen you risk unreliable installations.

7. Does the contractor belong to a trade association?

Area trade associations are NKEA for all contractors, IEC for open shop contractors and NECA for unionized contractors. Trade associations provide a vehicle for contractors to stay updated on industry developments and improved methods of installation.

8. Is the contractor available for 24/7, emergency on-call service?

When your equipment is down, you want to talk to a person- not a machine or a pager. You need immediate confirmation that someone is on the way to help. Anytime.

9. Do you understand the value of an EMR number?

EMR (Experience Modification Rate) appraisals are on-the-job safety ratings. Contractors with good safety records have been assigned EMR's below 1.

10. Does the contractor present your company with proactive solutions and initiatives that will save you money and make your facility more efficient?

Your electrical contractor should be your advocate when it comes to new ways for you to improve production numbers and efficiency. Does your contractor suggest new lighting to cut consumption or installation of power factor correction? Both of these simple procedures can cut your costs and eliminate penalties from your utility company.

