



DEAN NAGATOSHI

Six Vital Considerations When Hiring a Painting Contractor

Not all painters are created equal, so managers and boards must consider more than just the lowest bid

The following considerations could save you both money and frustration by preventing the risk of a bad painting project experience. The fact is, painters in general range in the quality of the services they provide. There are many inexperienced and unqualified people and companies that masquerade as professional painters. Oftentimes property managers and board members can become so focused on “how much” in an attempt to save money for their

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AOAO that they fail to consider quality above price. This can lead to hiring the wrong company and can expose them to potential liability due to shoddy quality and workmanship.



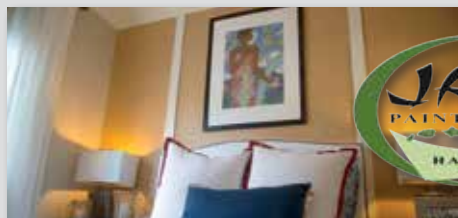
Consideration 1 : Do They Have the Appropriate Contractor's License for Work Required on Your Building?

By law, all painting contractors are required to have a valid C-33 Painting and Decorating Contractor license. But what if your project is like most, and also requires waterproofing, structural spall repairs or wood repairs? Each of these scopes of work relates to a different specialty contractor classification that requires a separate contractor's license. If a contractor does not have the contractor's license for the work required, it can be an indication that they lack the necessary expertise. Another consideration is that if the work is being performed by an unlicensed contractor, it may limit the AOA's recourse should the work prove defective in the future. It is easy to check by contacting the Department of Commerce & Consumer Affairs (DCCA),

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Professional and Vocational Licensing Service (PVL) or going online at pvl.ehawaii.gov.

Consideration 2: Do They Have Insurance and Are They Bondable?

The value of insurance coverage is not so readily obvious until something goes terribly wrong. The law requires that all contractors carry worker's compensation insurance for their employees and general liability insurance. Property managers should request a certificate of insurance from the contractor's insurance company to confirm the insurance coverage amounts and the policy expiration dates. It is not uncommon to request that the property management company and AOA be added on as additionally insured for added protection.

The ability of the contractor to provide a project performance bond reflects the financial strength and health of the contractor. This also directly relates to the value of any warranties that the contractor is giving and provides a safety net for the owner should the contractor not be able to complete the project.

Consideration 3: What Kind of Training Do Their Employees Receive, and How Often?

The fact is there's a big difference

between painting companies. The contractor's philosophy, organizational culture and leadership can determine the level of quality and service their workers are able to perform. Currently, all industries are faced with skilled worker shortages and the painting industry is no exception. A commitment to ongoing employee training in the skills and procedures of painting, waterproofing and safety makes for a smoothly running project, resulting in an aesthetically-pleasing finish that will last the longest time possible.

Consideration 4: Who Will be Assigned to the project?

Depending on the size of the contractor, there may be only a few contacts in the contractor's company to communicate with. You may be dealing directly with the owner of the painting contracting company, but most of the time it may just be one of the workers doing the work. Remember, workers get transferred to other projects all the time. It is important to establish the lines of communication to address any issues that may occur during the project.

Consideration 5: What Kind of Warranty Will the Contractor Provide?

The warranty that the contractor provides can vary by duration and

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what it includes and excludes. Project documents may specify a warranty, but contractors could qualify their proposals by providing a shorter warranty than what is specified. Project warranties may also relate to the contractor license issue as stated in Consideration #1 above. If a contractor does not have a license to perform specific work on the project, they would be considered an unlicensed contractor. It is doubtful that an unlicensed contractor can provide a valid warranty for work that they are not licensed to perform. Paint manufacturer warranties can also add another complexity to the project. Warranties may be for paint adhesion and or waterproofing. Some manufacturers may also include the labor and materials in their warranties. All exclusions and notification requirements should be noted.

Consideration 6: Who Will Oversee the Painting Project?

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There are various industry consultants that can work with the property managers and AOAOs to assist in selecting the contractors based on their past experience with the painting contractors that they have used on their projects. Consultants can also provide a level of comfort and safety by using their expertise to provide project administration services and oversee the work being performed. Due to the age of the buildings being repainted, it is very seldom just a repainting project. Usually surfaces need to be repaired, which will require a building permit.

In summary, the complexities of painting projects now require knowledge of building, environmental and

safety regulations that contractors need to follow. By hiring qualified and experienced painting and finishing contractors, building owners and managers will see long-lasting benefits that will result in a successful project that everyone can be proud of. ❖

Dean Nagatoshi is executive director of the Painting and Decorating Contractors Association of Hawaii, whose

membership includes active unionized painting, decorating, waterproofing and industrial coating contractors, associate manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors and dealers and affiliate contractors with a multitude of skilled and bonded employees across the state. Reach him at 479-6825 or dean@pdcahawaii.org, pdcahawaii.org.



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