

## **How to Find a Great Painter in the Central California Area**

It's great that you've made the choice to hire a pro to paint your home. Whether you're planning on having them paint the exterior or the interior (or both), you need to keep several things in mind before making your final choice.

### **Important Steps:**

1. Find out how long they've been in the painting business
2. Ask potential painters if they are a licensed contractor
3. See if you can get pricing quotes over e-mail or the phone
4. Get *at least* two quotes to make sure one isn't too high
5. Ask for references from previous clients

There are a lot of places to actually find the painters. Think if anyone you know has recently had a job done or moved into a new home. Whether it is a friend or family member, or even a coworker, you won't have a hard time getting a recommendation. You can also ask workers at stores like Home Depot or Lowes. You'll get some great ideas. The only thing you want to make sure though, is that the painter is capable of doing what you need. In this case, you want to be sure you get a residential rather than commercial painter.

### **These are some things to ask:**

#### **Did the painter do a high quality job? Were you happy with the work they provided?**

Generally, people will either be very excited about the quality of work they received, or they will just be satisfied. Chances are though, that if they are very excited about the job they got, it's because it wasn't very good. If you personally know the person you asked, you can even check out their job for yourself. Go drive by their home if they got exterior job, or ask if you can go inside if their job was on the interior.

#### **How well are the cut in areas done?**

The cut in areas and services that aren't supposed to be painted are one of the more difficult parts about painting. If the painter spillover on the door frames and concrete, then that means they're not very professional. When you go to look at someone's paint job, be on the lookout for these kinds of things. If you're on the inside of the home it is especially apparent. Look around the doors and on the windowsills. See if you notice any paint spilled over.

### **Was there any kind of guarantee or warranty?**

Painters that stand behind their work are the ones you want to hire. A three year warranty is pretty standard, but it's still a good idea to get it in writing for your own peace of mind. Painters that use high quality materials will not have a problem with this at all. Not only that, but painters that are competent in the work they provide will be more than happy to guarantee their work and offer you a warranty of some sort. If they aren't willing to do so, that should raise some red flags.

### **Were they friendly? Were they very polite?**

Usually this is a given if the painter is being recommended to you. No one will cheerfully recommend someone if they were not pleasant. It still helps to ask though because finding a polite painter that will answer all your questions is a must. Now, it's true that you might be able to get a very high quality job at a cheap price by sacrificing the personal customer service. However, do you really want to work with someone that seems annoyed by every question you ask?

## **How to Hire a Painter**

You really need to approach hiring a house painter like you would if you are looking to buy a car. You wouldn't just randomly flip through the Yellow Pages and pick a dealer, would you? You wouldn't just drive up to the first lot you came across and make a decision right there with you? You'd be surprised that a lot of homeowners do this with painters. They just call the painter with the largest ad or the first one they see. You'll be much better off if you do comparison shopping, much like you would when you are looking to buy a car.

### **Ask as many questions as you can think of**

**It's a good idea to ask how they plan to do the surface preparation before painting.**

The better of a job that it painter does with the prep work, the longer-lasting your results will be. Any qualified house painter will have a very thorough plan for all the washing, scraping, sanding, and priming.

**Will they be sure to prime the surface before painting?**

Unless the surface was previously painted, you really need to do priming beforehand.

**Do they plan on caulking? If they do, what areas they plan to do that on?**

You want to be sure that the paint job you get has a tight seal. In hard to reach places like scenes, gaps, cracks, holes, and joints, the paint might not get in there. It will stand out later on, so you want to be sure that you fill them up with caulk. This will also prevent any kind of moisture from getting behind the paint.

**You should always ask them what kind of paint are going to use, and if you have the option to buy your own.**

Now, you don't necessarily want to get the most expensive paint out there, but you definitely don't want to get the cheapest. If you're having the painter by the paint, make sure they can explain the benefits and why they chose that type. If you're going to buy it yourself, ask for their recommendations and ask them why.

### **Be Sure to Ask for a Quote**

If you want to be certain that you're going to get a good price, try to get a quote in writing from the painter. If they're thorough, they will tell you how long it will take to complete the job because that's factored into the price. This also helps to make sure that you both understand each other, so there will be no surprises later on. Show them the exact areas you want to paint and what you expect from that.

### **Make a Contract**

If the painter does not have one of their own, it's a good idea to get a contract together that specifies the work to be done, the schedule of payments, the start and end date, and the total cost. It should include everything down to the brand of paint to be purchased and the colors, even as specific as the number of coats involved. You'll also want to get the painter to agree to be responsible for cleaning up and removing the paint from the surfaces it's not supposed to be on.

## **What to Look for in a Qualified Painter**

These are some things that will set qualified painters apart from the amateurs:

- Better Business Bureau member -- it's a good idea to contact your local Better Business Bureau to check on the status of the painter. See if there're any complaints against them.
- You might try checking out Angies list at [www.angieslist.com](http://www.angieslist.com) to see if there are reviews about the painter. A lot of the time, you'll find good reviews and that is a great indication of the quality professional.
- Be sure to check if the painter is insured. You want them to be insured against workers compensation and liability. They can provide you with a policy to prove it upon request.

### **Commitment to Safety**

Accidents are a very common thing with home improvement jobs. The painter in question should have a good record of preventing property damage and any sort of injury. Skilled painters will have no problem telling you about their safety policies. If they're qualified to work on your home, safety will be a very high priority to them.

## **Cleanup and Paint Removal Responsibility**

This one is extremely important but a lot of people overlook it. Do you want to clean up after the painters? They're going to leave a huge mess, she want to be sure that they are the ones that clean. You want to be sure that they are committed to leaving the area as clean or cleaner than before they even got there.

## **Some Final Tips**

You're almost ready to select your house painter. Here are a couple more tips that will really help you out in the long run.

- If saving money is really important to you, then you're better off looking for a small business. Just because they're small doesn't mean that they can provide you with a quality results you desire, but they often charge less because they're trying to build up their business.
- If you plan on getting a lot of quotes, it's a good idea to throw out the cheapest and most expensive bids. Usually, the cheapest estimate is because the work provided won't be the highest quality or that the painter underestimated the job at hand. For the most expensive, you're probably looking at somebody who either overcharges or has too much business at the moment and really doesn't need yours. The estimates in the middle are the ones you want to look at.

**Congratulations! You're now well on your way to hiring the best painter for your house. You'll be amazed at the quality of work you get done and you'll enjoy working with whoever you choose to hire.**