

VANCOUVER CONSTRUCTION NETWORK

Hiring Contractors

Questions about finding, vetting, and working with
contractors in Metro Vancouver

11 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

vancouverconstructionnetwork.com/construction-brain

Table of Contents

1. What does a project manager do and should I hire one for my renovation?
2. What insurance should my contractor have in BC?
3. How far in advance should I book a contractor in Metro Vancouver?
4. Should I choose a gas or electric heat pump for my Vancouver home?
5. What is the going rate for a general contractor in Metro Vancouver?
6. What should I do before the contractor starts work on my home?
7. Should I hire a designer or an architect for my renovation?
8. What do contractors charge per square foot for renovations in Surrey?
9. Can I act as my own general contractor in British Columbia?
10. Should I pay a contractor upfront or in installments?
11. My contractor left and the job isn't done — what are my options in British Columbia?

What does a project manager do and should I hire one for my renovation?

A project manager coordinates all aspects of your renovation — scheduling trades, managing timelines, handling permits, and ensuring quality control. For complex renovations over \$50,000 or projects involving multiple trades, hiring a dedicated PM can save you significant time, stress, and often money through better coordination and fewer delays.

A construction project manager acts as the central hub for your renovation, handling the intricate dance of coordinating multiple contractors, suppliers, and inspections. They create detailed schedules, ensure materials arrive when needed, and manage the sequential flow of trades — making sure the electrician doesn't show up before the framer is done, or that your custom cabinets don't arrive before the flooring is installed. In Metro Vancouver's competitive construction market, good PMs have established relationships with reliable trades and can often secure better pricing and faster scheduling than homeowners working alone.

Project managers typically handle permit applications and inspections, which is particularly valuable in Vancouver where building permits can take 4-8 weeks for simple projects and 3-6+ months for complex renovations. They understand the BC Building Code (BCBC 2024) requirements and can navigate municipal building departments efficiently. For strata renovations — common in Vancouver's 50% condo market — PMs manage the additional complexity of strata approvals, insurance requirements, and noise restrictions.

Quality control and problem-solving represent another crucial PM function. They conduct regular site inspections, catch issues early, and coordinate solutions before small problems become expensive delays. When your plumber discovers unexpected galvanized pipes that need replacement, or Technical Safety BC requires electrical upgrades during inspection, an experienced PM can quickly adjust schedules and budgets while keeping the project moving forward.

In Vancouver's market, project management typically costs 8-15% of the total project budget. For a \$75,000 kitchen renovation, expect to pay \$6,000-\$11,000 for professional project management. However, good PMs often save more than their fee through better trade coordination, bulk purchasing power, and avoiding costly delays. Vancouver construction costs are already 15-25% above the national average — poor coordination can easily add another 10-20% in delays and rework.

Consider hiring a project manager if your renovation involves multiple trades, structural changes, or permits. Kitchen and bathroom renovations, whole-house renovations, basement developments, and additions typically benefit from professional management. For simple projects like painting or flooring replacement, the PM cost usually isn't justified. Also consider a PM if you're managing the renovation remotely, have a demanding work schedule, or lack construction experience.

Next steps: Interview 2-3 project managers with experience in your type of renovation and Metro Vancouver permits. Ask for references from recent clients and verify they carry WorkSafeBC coverage and \$2M+ liability insurance. Many general contractors include project management in their services, so compare dedicated PMs against full-service contractors to determine the best value for your specific project.

Q2

What insurance should my contractor have in BC?

Your contractor should carry a minimum of \$2 million in commercial general liability insurance, plus **WorkSafeBC** coverage and professional liability insurance for specialized trades. This protects both you and the contractor from accidents, property damage, and workplace injuries during your project.

Commercial General Liability Insurance is the foundation of contractor coverage in BC. This protects against property damage, bodily injury, and completed operations claims. Most reputable contractors carry \$2-5 million in coverage, with many carrying even higher limits for larger projects. This insurance covers scenarios like accidentally damaging your neighbor's property, a worker being injured on-site, or defective work causing damage after completion. Always request a current certificate of insurance before work begins, and verify the policy is active by calling the insurance company directly.

WorkSafeBC coverage is mandatory for all contractors operating in British Columbia. This isn't optional insurance—it's required by law and provides workplace injury coverage for the contractor's employees. Contractors must provide proof of current WorkSafeBC registration and good standing. If a contractor claims they don't need WorkSafeBC because they're a sole proprietor, be cautious—even single-person operations often require coverage. You can verify a contractor's WorkSafeBC status online at worksafebc.com or by calling 604-231-8888.

Professional liability insurance becomes important for specialized trades like engineers, architects, or contractors doing complex technical work. This covers errors and omissions in professional services. Bonding provides additional protection—a bonded contractor has financial backing to complete your project or compensate you if they default. While not always required for smaller projects, bonding is valuable for major renovations over \$50,000.

The Vancouver angle include strata requirements if you're renovating a condo or townhouse. Most strata corporations require contractors to provide proof of \$2+ million liability insurance and name the strata corporation as an additional insured party. Many stratas also require a damage deposit (\$500-\$2,000) before work begins. Check your strata bylaws and get written approval from strata council before starting any renovation work.

Red flags to avoid: Never hire a contractor who can't provide current insurance certificates, claims insurance "isn't necessary" for small jobs, or asks you to add them to your homeowner's policy. Uninsured contractors put you at serious financial risk—if someone is injured or property is damaged, you could be held liable. Additionally, if you hire an uninsured contractor and they're injured, you might be considered their employer under WorkSafeBC regulations, making you responsible for workplace safety and potential claims.

Start by getting quotes from a few licensed contractors to understand what your specific project will cost.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

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- [Tonic Siding ?](#)
- [SRS Roofing & Exteriors ?](#)

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Q3

How far in advance should I book a contractor in Metro Vancouver?

For most renovation projects in Metro Vancouver, you should book contractors 4-8 weeks in advance, though popular contractors and specialized trades often require 2-3 months of lead time during peak season.

The booking timeline varies significantly based on several factors. General contractors handling full renovations typically need 6-12 weeks advance notice, especially during the busy spring and summer months when everyone wants exterior work completed before the October rains return. Specialized trades like custom millwork, tile installers, and high-end kitchen contractors often have even longer wait times — sometimes 3-4 months for the most sought-after professionals.

Seasonal demand plays a huge role in Vancouver's construction market. The prime renovation window runs from May through September when weather permits exterior work like roofing, siding, and deck construction. During this peak period, contractors' schedules fill up quickly, and many homeowners book their projects in February or March for summer completion. Conversely, interior renovations during the rainy season (October through March) may have shorter lead times, though the best contractors stay busy year-round.

Project complexity also affects booking timelines. Simple jobs like painting or flooring might only need 2-3 weeks notice, while major renovations requiring permits, custom work, or coordination between multiple trades need much longer. Kitchen and bathroom renovations often require 8-12 weeks advance booking because they involve plumbing, electrical, and custom cabinetry — all of which need careful scheduling.

Vancouver's permit process adds another layer of timing consideration. Building permits can take 4-8 weeks for simple projects and 3-6 months for complex renovations, so factor this into your planning. Many contractors won't firm up start dates until permits are approved, which means booking early is even more critical.

Market conditions in Metro Vancouver remain competitive, with skilled trades in high demand. The region's construction boom, combined with strict licensing requirements through **Technical Safety BC** for electrical and gas work, means qualified contractors often have full schedules. Popular contractors frequently work with repeat clients and referrals, so new customers may face longer wait times.

For emergency repairs — flooding, electrical issues, or structural problems — reputable contractors typically reserve capacity for urgent situations and can often respond within 24-48 hours, though you'll pay premium rates for emergency service.

Your best strategy is to start researching contractors 2-3 months before your desired start date. Get quotes from multiple professionals, check references, and verify their **WorkSafeBC** coverage and any required licensing. Once you've selected your contractor, be prepared to put down a reasonable deposit to secure your spot in their schedule. Remember that the best contractors are worth waiting for — rushing into a project with whoever's available immediately often leads to disappointing results and higher costs down the road.

Browse verified contractors in our directory at Vancouver Construction Network to start building your shortlist early and avoid the last-minute scramble.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

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- [Vancouver Hood Doctors ?](#)
- [Holloway Painting ?](#)
- [Skon Design Build Ltd. ?](#)

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Should I choose a gas or electric heat pump for my Vancouver home?

In Vancouver, you should choose an electric heat pump over a gas heat pump. Electric heat pumps are far more common, cost-effective, and better supported by local rebates and infrastructure in Metro Vancouver.

Electric heat pumps are the clear winner for Vancouver homes due to several compelling factors. BC Hydro's relatively clean and affordable electricity makes electric heat pumps highly efficient and environmentally friendly. With Vancouver's mild winter temperatures rarely dropping below -5°C , modern electric heat pumps can maintain excellent efficiency year-round. Cold climate models from manufacturers like Mitsubishi, Daikin, and Carrier can operate effectively down to -25°C , making them more than adequate for our coastal climate.

The financial incentives strongly favor electric heat pumps. Through CleanBC Better Homes, income-qualified homeowners can receive up to \$16,000 in rebates for electric heat pump installations, with additional rebates available for insulation and electrical upgrades. BC Hydro also offers rebates up to \$4,000 for qualifying electric heat pump systems. These substantial rebates can cover 30-50% of your total installation cost. Gas heat pumps, while available, don't qualify for the same level of provincial incentives.

Gas heat pumps face practical challenges in Vancouver. While they exist and can be efficient, they're much less common in the local market, meaning fewer contractors are experienced with installation and service. Parts availability and warranty support are also more limited. Additionally, with BC's CleanBC plan aiming to reduce natural gas use in buildings, future gas utility rates may increase significantly. Many Vancouver municipalities are also implementing building code changes that favor electric systems over gas.

Installation costs and complexity differ significantly. Electric heat pumps typically cost \$8,000-\$18,000 installed for a whole-home system, depending on your home's size and existing electrical capacity. Gas heat pumps often cost 20-40% more due to their specialized nature and limited contractor availability. Electric systems also integrate more easily with existing electrical panels, though you may need electrical upgrades (budget \$2,000-\$5,000) if your panel is older.

For professional installation, you'll need a licensed contractor registered with **Technical Safety BC** (TSBC) for the electrical connections, and potentially a gas fitter if you're removing existing gas equipment. The system must meet **BCBC 2024** requirements and may require a building permit depending on your municipality and installation complexity.

Your next step should be getting quotes from multiple licensed HVAC contractors who can assess your home's heating load, electrical capacity, and ductwork. Consider the total cost including rebates, and don't forget to factor in long-term operating costs - with BC's electricity rates, electric heat pumps typically cost 40-60% less to operate

than gas heating systems.

Find a Electrical Contractor

Vancouver Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [MC Welding Services Ltd. ?](#)
- [Frick's Glass and Mirrors ?](#)
- [Pacific custom metals ?](#)

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Q5

What is the going rate for a general contractor in Metro Vancouver?

General contractor rates in Metro Vancouver typically range from \$75-150 per hour for smaller projects, with larger renovations often priced as a percentage markup (15-25%) on total project costs. The wide range reflects the contractor's experience, project complexity, and current market demand.

For hourly rates, expect to pay \$75-95/hour for newer contractors or simpler work, \$95-125/hour for experienced professionals on standard renovations, and \$125-150+/hour for specialized work or high-end projects. These rates are among the highest in Canada, reflecting Vancouver's premium construction market and high cost of living.

Most general contractors on larger projects (kitchen/bathroom renovations, additions, whole-home renovations) work on a cost-plus or fixed-price basis rather than hourly. In cost-plus arrangements, contractors typically charge a 15-25% markup on all materials, subcontractors, and permits, plus their project management fee. For fixed-price contracts, this markup is built into the total quote.

Project-based pricing is more common and often more economical for homeowners. A typical bathroom renovation might run \$18,000-60,000, while kitchen renovations range \$30,000-100,000. The contractor's fee represents roughly 20-30% of these totals when you factor in their markup on materials and coordination of trades.

Factors affecting rates include project location (West Vancouver and central Vancouver command premium pricing), project complexity, timeline requirements, and seasonal demand. Summer months see higher rates due to increased demand for exterior work. Projects requiring extensive permitting, heritage considerations, or strata coordination also command higher fees.

What's typically included in a general contractor's rate: project planning and scheduling, permit applications, coordinating subcontractors, material procurement, site supervision, and cleanup. Most contractors require a deposit (typically 10% down, with progress payments tied to completion milestones) and maintain **WorkSafeBC** coverage and \$2M+ liability insurance.

When hiring, verify the contractor is registered with WorkSafeBC, carries adequate insurance, and has positive references from recent Metro Vancouver projects. For new construction or major additions, ensure they're a Licensed Residential Builder registered with BC Housing. Get detailed written quotes from 2-3 contractors, and remember that the lowest bid isn't always the best value in Vancouver's competitive market.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Vancouver Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [Hard Rock stucco Ltd. ?](#)
- [Cottage Carpets Ltd ?](#)
- [Effervescent construction Ltd ?](#)

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Q6

What should I do before the contractor starts work on my home?

Before any contractor begins work on your home, you need to verify their credentials, secure proper permits, establish clear contracts, and protect your property and family. This preparation phase is crucial for avoiding costly mistakes, legal issues, and safety hazards during your renovation.

Verify Contractor Credentials and Insurance

Start by confirming your contractor is properly licensed and insured for Metro Vancouver work. Check that they have current **WorkSafeBC** coverage (BC's workplace insurance), general liability insurance of at least \$2 million, and any required trade licenses through **Technical Safety BC** (TSBC) for electrical or gas work. Request certificates of insurance and verify them directly with the insurance company. For new construction or major additions, ensure your contractor is a Licensed Residential Builder registered with BC Housing, as this is legally required under the **Homeowner Protection Act**.

Secure Permits and Approvals

Most renovation work in Vancouver requires building permits, and it's typically the homeowner's responsibility to ensure they're obtained. Contact your municipal building department (311 for Vancouver, or your local city hall) to determine what permits are needed. Simple permits take 4-8 weeks in most Metro Vancouver municipalities, while complex projects can take 3-6+ months. Don't let contractors start unpermitted work – this creates serious liability issues and can affect your home insurance coverage.

If you live in a strata (condo or townhouse), you'll need written approval from your strata council before any work begins. Review your strata bylaws for noise restrictions (typically Monday-Friday 8am-5pm), contractor insurance requirements, and damage deposit policies. Most stratas require a refundable deposit of \$500-\$2,000 before construction starts.

Establish Clear Contracts and Payment Terms

Never proceed without a detailed written contract that includes specific materials, timelines, total costs, and change order procedures. In BC, the Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act requires contracts over \$500 to be in writing and include a 10-day cooling-off period for door-to-door sales. Avoid paying large amounts upfront – legitimate contractors typically request 10-15% down with progress payments tied to completion milestones. Under BC's **Builders Lien Act**, you should hold back 10% of each payment for 55 days after project completion to protect against unpaid subcontractors or suppliers.

Protect Your Property and Plan for Disruption

Remove or protect valuable items, furniture, and belongings from the work area. Discuss dust containment measures, especially important for older Vancouver homes that may contain asbestos or lead paint. Establish clear access routes and parking arrangements – many Vancouver neighborhoods have limited street parking and permit requirements. Plan for utility disruptions and discuss how your family will manage during the renovation, particularly for kitchen or bathroom projects.

Final Preparations

Take detailed photos of your home's condition before work begins, both for insurance purposes and to document any pre-existing issues. Notify your neighbors about the upcoming work, especially in dense Vancouver neighborhoods where noise and access can be concerns. Confirm your homeowner's insurance covers renovation work and consider increasing coverage limits if you're doing major improvements.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Vancouver Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [Grouse Railing Ltd ?](#)
- [Levelone Construction Ltd. ?](#)
- [Gold Coast Stucco and Design Limited ?](#)

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Should I hire a designer or an architect for my renovation?

The choice between a designer and architect depends on your project's scope and complexity. For most residential renovations in Metro Vancouver, an interior designer or residential designer will meet your needs and budget, while architects are essential for structural changes, additions, or complex projects requiring professional engineering oversight.

Interior designers excel at space planning, material selection, and creating functional, beautiful interiors. They're perfect for kitchen and bathroom renovations, whole-house makeovers, or updating finishes and layouts within existing walls. In Vancouver's competitive renovation market, a good designer typically charges \$75-150 per hour or 10-15% of your renovation budget. They can work with your contractor to specify materials, create detailed drawings, and ensure your vision comes together cohesively.

Residential designers (often called building designers) bridge the gap between interior designers and architects. They can handle space planning, create construction drawings for permits, and manage smaller additions or reconfigurations. They're ideal for secondary suite conversions, basement finishing, or minor additions that don't require structural engineering. Their fees typically range from \$3,000-15,000 depending on project complexity.

Architects are required when you're making significant structural changes, adding square footage, or working on heritage properties in Vancouver. Under the **BC Building Code**, certain projects require an architect's seal - particularly anything involving structural modifications, large additions, or complex building envelope work. Vancouver's strict heritage guidelines in neighborhoods like Shaughnessy or Kitsilano often mandate architectural involvement. Architect fees typically range from \$8,000-25,000+ for residential projects, or 8-15% of construction costs.

, architects understand local zoning complexities like the new multiplex policies in R1-1 zones, laneway house regulations, and **BCBC 2024** seismic requirements. They're also essential for navigating Vancouver's notoriously complex permitting process, which can take 3-6 months even for straightforward projects.

Consider hiring an architect if you're adding square footage, removing load-bearing walls, working with a heritage property, or dealing with complex site conditions common in Vancouver (steep slopes, lane access, or proximity to neighbors). Choose a designer if you're updating interiors, reconfiguring non-structural spaces, or working within your existing footprint.

Your next step is to clearly define your project scope and budget.

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Vancouver Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- I love kitchens LTD ?
- Theraluxe Home Wellness ?
- A&B Tool Rentals ?

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Q8

What do contractors charge per square foot for renovations in Surrey?

Renovation costs in Surrey typically range from \$50-200+ per square foot depending on the scope of work, with most homeowners paying \$75-150 per square foot for comprehensive renovations.

The wide range reflects the significant difference between basic updates and high-end renovations. **Basic renovations** (paint, flooring, fixtures) generally cost \$50-75 per square foot, while mid-range renovations (new kitchen, bathroom updates, some electrical/plumbing) run \$75-125 per square foot. **High-end renovations** involving structural changes, luxury finishes, or full gut jobs can easily exceed \$150-200 per square foot.

Factors that influence pricing include the age and style of your home. Many Surrey properties are newer builds (1980s-2000s) which may require less structural work than older Vancouver character homes, potentially keeping costs on the lower end. However, Surrey's rapid growth means contractor availability can be tight, especially for popular areas like Fleetwood, South Surrey, and Cloverdale. The city's building department at 604-591-4086 is generally more efficient than Vancouver's, which can help keep project timelines and costs manageable.

What's typically included in per-square-foot pricing: labor, basic materials, permits, and standard finishes. **What's usually extra:** high-end appliances, custom millwork, structural engineering, hazardous material removal, and site-specific challenges like poor soil conditions or utility relocations. Many Surrey homes built in the 1990s-2000s may have aluminum wiring or other issues that add unexpected costs.

Licensing and code compliance is essential for accurate pricing. A 1,000 square foot basement renovation might cost \$75,000 with basic finishes, but the same space with a full kitchen, bathroom, and separate entrance (for a legal secondary suite) could easily reach \$125,000-150,000. Surrey allows secondary suites in most single-family zones, but they must meet **BC Building Code** requirements and obtain proper permits.

Get detailed quotes from at least three licensed contractors, ensuring they include permits, materials, and labor.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Vancouver Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- Lush Windows & Doors ?
- Window & Door Project Solutions ?
- Mr marble and stone ?

Browse all contractors ?

Q9

Can I act as my own general contractor in British Columbia?

Yes, you can act as your own general contractor in British Columbia for most residential renovation projects, but there are important legal requirements and limitations you need to understand.

Acting as your own general contractor means you'll coordinate all trades, manage schedules, handle permits, and ensure code compliance. While this can save money on contractor markup (typically 15-25%), it requires significant time, construction knowledge, and project management skills.

Legal Requirements and Limitations

In BC, homeowners can general contract their own principal residence renovations, but you cannot do all the work yourself. Electrical work must be performed by a licensed electrical contractor registered with **Technical Safety BC** (TSBC), and gas work requires a licensed gas contractor also registered with TSBC. Plumbing work beyond simple fixture replacements requires a licensed plumber. These aren't suggestions—they're legal requirements, and insurance claims can be denied for unpermitted work.

For new home construction or laneway houses, you must use a Licensed Residential Builder registered with BC Housing under the **Homeowner Protection Act**. This ensures your new home is covered by the mandatory 2-5-10 home warranty insurance. However, for renovations to existing homes, you can act as your own general contractor.

What You'll Be Responsible For

As your own general contractor, you'll need to obtain building permits from your municipal building department, coordinate inspections at required stages, ensure all work meets the **BC Building Code (BCBC 2024)**, manage **WorkSafeBC** requirements if you hire employees, and maintain proper insurance coverage. You'll also need to

understand the **Builders Lien Act**—contractors and suppliers can place liens on your property for unpaid work, so managing payments and holdbacks properly is crucial.

Vancouver's permitting process is notoriously slow, often taking 4-8 weeks for simple permits and 3-6+ months for complex projects. If you're in a strata property (condo or townhouse), you'll need written strata council approval before starting work, and your contractors must provide proof of \$2M+ liability insurance. Most stratas also require damage deposits and restrict construction hours to weekdays 8am-5pm.

When to Reconsider

While legally possible, acting as your own general contractor isn't always wise. Complex projects involving structural changes, major electrical/plumbing work, or heritage properties require expertise that can prevent costly mistakes. Licensed general contractors carry liability insurance, understand code requirements, have established trade relationships, and can often get better material pricing.

If you decide to proceed, start by getting your building permit, ensure you have adequate insurance coverage, create detailed contracts with all trades, and familiarize yourself with inspection requirements.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

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- [Heilman Renovations ?](#)
- [The Local Window Guy ?](#)
- [Maple Leaf Appliance Repair ?](#)

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Should I pay a contractor upfront or in installments?

Never pay a contractor the full amount upfront — this is one of the biggest red flags in construction and leaves you completely vulnerable if things go wrong.

The standard practice in Metro Vancouver is to structure payments based on project milestones, typically with no more than 10% down for materials or permits, followed by progress payments as work is completed. Legitimate contractors have established credit with suppliers and don't need large upfront payments to purchase materials.

Recommended Payment Structure

For most renovation projects, follow this approach: Start with a small deposit (5-10%) upon signing the contract, then tie payments to completed work phases. For example, on a kitchen renovation, you might pay 25% when demolition is complete and materials are delivered, 25% when rough-in work (plumbing, electrical) passes inspection, 25% when drywall and painting are finished, and the final 25% upon project completion and your satisfaction.

Under BC's **Builders Lien Act**, you should hold back 10% of each payment for 55 days after project completion. This "holdback" protects you if the contractor hasn't paid their suppliers or subcontractors, who could otherwise place a lien on your property. Many homeowners don't realize this is their legal right and responsibility.

BC's Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act requires written contracts for home improvement work over \$500, and you have the right to cancel within 10 days if the contract was signed at your home. The contract must include detailed scope, materials, timeline, and payment schedule. For projects requiring permits in Vancouver or other Metro Vancouver municipalities, ensure your contractor pulls permits before starting work — unpermitted work can create serious issues when selling your home.

When to call a professional Be extremely wary of contractors who demand large upfront payments, claim they need money for materials, or pressure you to pay immediately. Legitimate contractors typically have 30-60 day payment terms with suppliers. Also avoid contractors who show up at your door offering deals, quote significantly below others (20%+ lower often indicates problems), or can't provide proper licensing and insurance documentation.

Get at least three detailed written quotes, verify each contractor's **WorkSafeBC** coverage and business license, and check references from recent projects.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

Vancouver Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- SteelEdge Reinforcing Ltd. ?
- Denemight construction ?
- BC Proud Painting Services ?

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Q11

My contractor left and the job isn't done — what are my options in British Columbia?

You have several legal and practical options in BC when a contractor abandons a project, but your specific remedies depend on your contract terms, payment status, and whether permits are involved.

This is unfortunately common in BC's hot construction market. Your first step is to document everything — take photos of the incomplete work, gather all contracts, invoices, and communication records. Don't make any additional payments until you understand your legal position.

Review your contract immediately to understand termination clauses, payment schedules, and completion timelines. If you have a written contract, it should outline procedures for early termination and what happens to materials already purchased. If you only have a verbal agreement, BC's Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act (BPCPA) still provides some protection, especially if the contract value exceeds \$500.

For payment disputes and recovery, you have several avenues. If you've overpaid for work not completed, you can pursue the contractor through small claims court (up to \$35,000) or BC Supreme Court for larger amounts. If the contractor owes money to suppliers or subcontractors, they may file liens against your property under BC's **Builders Lien Act** — you'll need legal advice to navigate this. The 10% holdback rule exists partly for this reason — if you've been holding back 10% of payments, don't release it until all lien periods expire (55 days after completion).

Check if your contractor has **WorkSafeBC** coverage — all contractors in BC must carry this. If they don't, you could be liable for workplace injuries. Also verify if they're properly licensed with **Technical Safety BC** for electrical or gas work, or registered with BC Housing if this involves new construction requiring a Licensed Residential Builder.

For permit issues, contact your municipal building department immediately. If permits are open, you'll need to either have the original contractor complete required inspections or hire a new contractor to take over. Some municipalities allow permit transfers, others require new applications. Don't let permits expire — this creates bigger

problems and costs.

Finding a replacement contractor can be challenging mid-project. New contractors often charge premiums to take over someone else's work because they're inheriting unknown problems. Get multiple quotes and be upfront about the situation. Expect to pay 15-25% more than if starting fresh, and budget extra for correcting any substandard work.

Your next steps: Stop all payments, document everything, review your contract, contact your municipal building department about permit status, and consult a lawyer if significant money is involved. For disputes under \$5,000, consider the Civil Resolution Tribunal at civilresolutionbc.ca. For larger amounts or complex lien issues, you'll need legal counsel experienced in BC construction law.

The key is acting quickly — lien deadlines and permit expiry dates don't wait, and the longer a project sits incomplete, the more expensive it becomes to restart.

Find a General Contractors Contractor

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- [Terra Siteworks LTD. ?](#)
- [Effervescent construction Ltd ?](#)
- [ConstructX Developments Inc ?](#)

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