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# Contractor Standards GUIDE

CODE OF ETHICS & COMPETENCY

Learn How To  
Choose The  
Right Contractor...  
**The First Time.**

# Contractor Standards Guide

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# So, You're Thinking About A Remodeling Project For Your Home?



Curtis Merrell

Merrell Home Improvement We've always done a good job and treated our customers right—and we've been able to build a nice business because of it. However, over the years I've noticed that some consumers will choose less-than-reputable companies to do jobs for them... usually because they are quoted less money. Don't get me wrong: I'm all for good, honest competition, but it pains me to see good folks risk their hard-earned money with contractors who don't have their best interests at heart. You deserve a great value for your money—which includes an honest contractor who uses high quality products and stands behind their work in both word and deed.

## Industry Standards Weren't Tough Enough

We wanted to find a way to educate consumers about how to choose a good, honest home improvement contractor. The industry standards simply aren't tough enough—just about anybody with a hammer and a pickup truck can be a contractor. That's why we've pioneered a set of standards called the **Code of Ethics & Competency for Remodeling Contractors**. The Code calls for contractors to uphold a high set of standards that will allow you to judge BEFORE hand whether or not a contractor is likely to do the job right. This guide specifies those standards.

Before you hire any company to work in or around your home, make sure you consult this guide and INSIST that the company comply with EVERY SINGLE STANDARD in this book. If you do, chances are excellent you'll get exactly what you want out of your project.

Sincerely,

Curtis Merrell

Owner, Merrell Home Improvement

“We were shocked and embarrassed when we found out that contractors were America's #1 most complained about industry.”



# Chapter 1: Stability

You need to make sure that any contractor you do business with has proven themselves in the past, and will be there if you need them in the future. **Don't just ASK the contractor if they are stable;** look for tangible proof of longevity and financial stability by asking for the items listed on the next few pages.

## What To Look For: Proof Of Establishment

**Why It's Important:** Believe it or not, many contractors use a pickup truck for an office and showroom. Make sure that any contractor you're dealing with is substantial enough to have a real office with all the normal business functions—accounting, production, sales, etc. If a contractor does not have an office, that should tell you something. Don't fall for the “we just use our trucks as offices!” line.



25 Jefferson Street  
Clarksville, TN 37040  
capitalbank-us.com



December 2, 2015

Re: Marvin C. Merrell  
DBA Merrell Home Improvements

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a financial reference letter on behalf of the above referenced client.

Marvin C. Merrell dba Merrell Home Improvements has maintained numerous accounts with our bank since the year 2000.

All loan and deposit accounts have been maintained as agreed. We do not hesitate to give Marvin C. Merrell dba Merrell Home Improvements our highest rating of financial stability.

Marvin C. Merrell dba Merrell Home Improvements is a valued customer of Capital Bank.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Harris  
Commercial Lending  
Capital Bank  
(931) 920-6935  
bonnie.harris@capitalbank-us.com



Alside Supply  
900 Fiberglass Rd  
Nashville, Tn. 37129  
615-248-6577

Re: Alside Supply

To Whom It May Concern:

Good relationships between supplier and business owner are essential for conducting business - especially within the contracting industry.

With this in mind, Alside Supply, values the long-standing relationship that Merrell Home Improvement has built and maintained with us.

Great communication, timely payments and current account status adds up to a perfect relationship between us.

Call me anytime. I would be pleased to provide a supplier reference in good standing.

Sincerely,

Matt Grant( Alside Sales Representative)

## What To Look For: Bank Letter

**Why It's Important:** Good standing with a bank is crucial for any business, by gaining the confidence and security of its financial managers allows a company not only to sustain itself and endure even in rough economic times, but to innovate and grow to meet and service customer demands.

## What To Look For: Supplier Letter

**Why It's Important:** This is written confirmation of the company's dealings with a supplier of the product they install stating that they are in good standing as a vendor and pay their bills promptly. These letters are easy for your contractor to obtain from suppliers. If a contractor says they are difficult to obtain, then there might be something that they're trying to hide.



## What To Look For: Business License

**Why It's Important:** Make sure they have been operating under the same name for a minimum of 5 years. Many contractors open and close their doors multiple times to avoid past customer complaints. (Naturally, some businesses will be legitimately new—if so, get a 10 year work history of the owner and ASK questions!)

## What To Look For: Insurance

**Why It's Important:** You need to know if your contractor carries general liability insurance for both commercial and residential projects. A sizable contractor will carry no less than \$500,000... and usually around \$1,000,000 of coverage. If your contractor's insurance policy can't cover potential damages, then the contractor would be personally liable. If he cannot cover the damages himself, you will have no legal recourse and will end up paying for any possible damages or injuries yourself. Many contractors are not financially stable...and don't carry proper insurance coverage to protect you against losses. Additionally, contractors who fail to provide workers compensation benefits risk severe governmental penalties and potentially company-ending lawsuits should an employee become injured.

**Merrell Home Improvement** carries \$1,000,000 of general liability coverage, and here's the certificate to prove it! Do NOT deal with a contractor without sizable coverage, or you will foot the bill for the mistake.

ACORD®		CERTIFICATE OF LIABILITY INSURANCE		DATE (MM/DD/YYYY)		
				6/24/2015		
<p>THIS CERTIFICATE IS ISSUED AS A MATTER OF INFORMATION ONLY AND CONFERS NO RIGHTS UPON THE CERTIFICATE HOLDER. THIS CERTIFICATE DOES NOT AFFIRMATIVELY OR NEGATIVELY AMEND, EXTEND OR ALTER THE COVERAGE AFFORDED BY THE POLICIES BELOW. THIS CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE ISSUING INSURER(S), AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE OR PRODUCER, AND THE CERTIFICATE HOLDER.</p> <p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> If the certificate holder is an ADDITIONAL INSURED, the policy(ies) must be endorsed. If SUBROGATION IS WAIVED, subject to the terms and conditions of the policy, certain policies may require an endorsement. A statement on this certificate does not confer rights to the certificate holder in lieu of such endorsements(s).</p>						
<b>PRODUCER</b> Wyatt Insurance Services, Inc Suite 200-D 25 Jefferson St Clarksville TN 37040		<b>CONTACT</b> NAME: Beverly Taylor PHONE: (931) 802-6048 FAX: (931) 802-6043 E-MAIL: info@wyattinsurance.com ADDRESS:				
<b>INSURED</b> Marvin C Merrell, DBA Merrell Home Improvement 445 Alfred Thun Road Clarksville TN 37040		<b>INSURER(S) AFFORDING COVERAGE</b> INSURER A: Harford Mutual INSURER B: Builders Mutual INSURER C: INSURER D: INSURER E: INSURER F:				
<b>COVERAGES</b>		<b>CERTIFICATE NUMBER:</b> CL1562409611		<b>REVISION NUMBER:</b>		
<p>THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE POLICIES OF INSURANCE LISTED BELOW HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO THE INSURED NAMED ABOVE FOR THE POLICY PERIOD INDICATED. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY REQUIREMENT, TERM OR CONDITION OF ANY CONTRACT OR OTHER DOCUMENT WITH RESPECT TO WHICH THIS CERTIFICATE MAY BE ISSUED OR MAY PERTAIN, THE INSURANCE AFFORDED BY THE POLICIES DESCRIBED HEREIN IS SUBJECT TO ALL THE TERMS, EXCLUSIONS AND CONDITIONS OF SUCH POLICIES. LIMITS SHOWN MAY HAVE BEEN REDUCED BY PAID CLAIMS.</p>						
LINE	TYPE OF INSURANCE	INSUR. PROVIDER	POLICY NUMBER	POLICY EFF. DATE (MM/DD/YYYY)	POLICY EXP. DATE (MM/DD/YYYY)	LIMITS
A	GENERAL LIABILITY					EACH OCCURRENCE \$ 1,000,000
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL GENERAL LIABILITY		9142980	6/29/2015	6/29/2016	DAMAGE TO RENTED PREMISES (EA OCCURRENCE) \$ 100,000
	<input type="checkbox"/> CLAIMS-MADE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUR					MED EXP (Any one person) \$ 10,000
						PERSONAL & ADV INJURY \$ 1,000,000
GEN'L AGGREGATE LIMIT APPLIES PER: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLICY <input type="checkbox"/> PROJ. <input type="checkbox"/> LOC						GENERAL AGGREGATE \$ 2,000,000 PRODUCTS - COMP/OP AGG \$ 2,000,000
A	AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY					COMBINED SINGLE LIMIT (EA ACCIDENT) \$ 3,000,000
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ANY AUTO		6055805	6/29/2015	6/29/2016	BODILY INJURY (Per person) \$
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALL OWNED AUTOS <input type="checkbox"/> SCHEDULED AUTOS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NON-OWNED AUTOS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HIRED AUTOS					BODILY INJURY (Per accident) \$
A	UMBRELLA LMB					PROPERTY DAMAGE (Per accident) \$
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCESS LIAB <input type="checkbox"/> CLAIMS-MADE		7966990	6/29/2015	6/29/2016	EACH OCCURRENCE \$ 1,000,000
WORKERS COMPENSATION AND EMPLOYER LIABILITY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> ANY PROPRIETOR/PARTNER/EXECUTIVE OFFICER/MEMBER EXCLUDED? (Mandatory in WA) If yes, describe below:						WC STATU- (EA EMPLOYEE) \$ 100,000 E.L. EACH ACCIDENT \$ 100,000 E.L. DISEASE - EA EMPLOYEE \$ 100,000 E.L. DISEASE - POLICY LIMIT \$ 500,000
DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS / LOCATIONS / VEHICLES (Attach ACORD 101, Additional Remarks Schedule, if more space is required)						
<b>CERTIFICATE HOLDER</b> *FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY*		<b>CANCELLATION</b> SHOULD ANY OF THE ABOVE DESCRIBED POLICIES BE CANCELLED BEFORE THE EXPIRATION DATE THEREOF, NOTICE WILL BE DELIVERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICY PROVISIONS. AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE Beverly Taylor/HAM				
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# Chapter 2: Reputation

You can tell a great deal about a contractor based on what others are saying about them—particularly their customers. The old advice of “ask for 3 references” is just too easy to fake. You’ll need to get a little tougher with your contractor to protect yourself. Insist that any contractor you’re considering can produce the things listed on the next few pages to PROVE that their reputation is rock solid.

## What To Look For: BBB Accreditation

**Why It's Important:** You need to go further than just checking a contractor’s standing with the BBB. Remember, many contractors shut down and open under new names year after year. So check to see how long they’ve been a member, and check to be sure the contractor is accredited by the BBB. This means that if complaints arise, the contractor agrees that the BBB’s judgment is binding and must perform accordingly. Without this agreement, you may have no recourse. **Merrell Home Improvement** is a BBB Accredited Business with an A+ rating at the time of this printing.

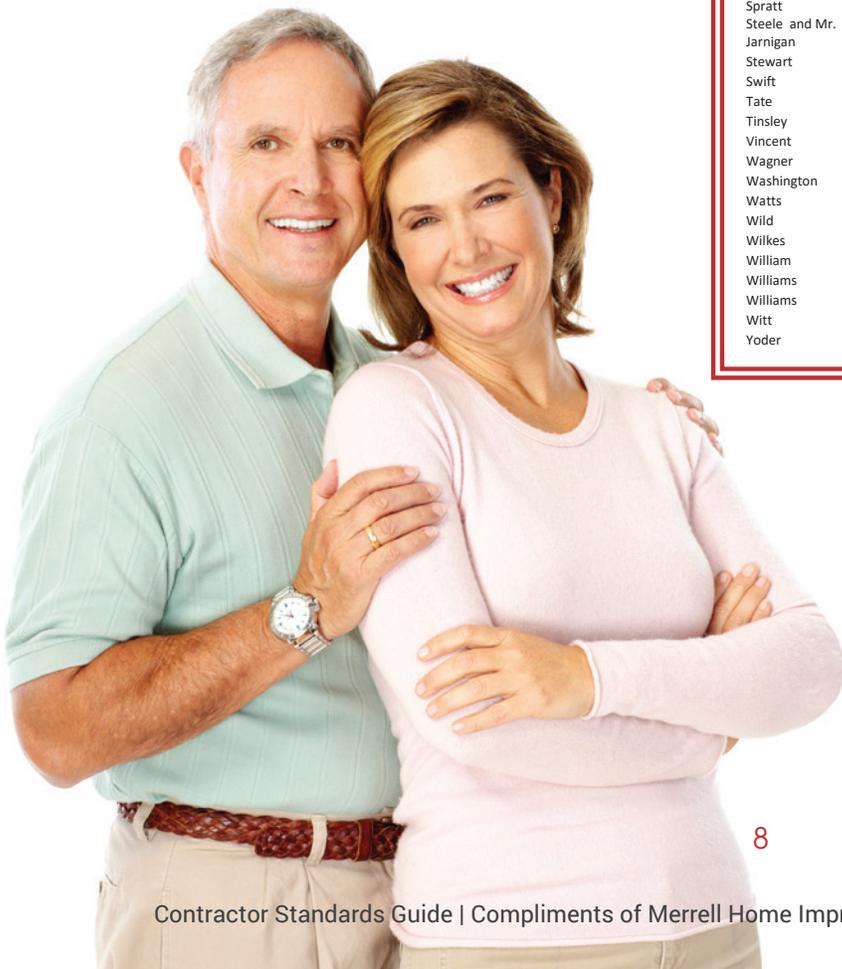


## What To Look For: References

**Why It's Important:** All reputable contractors carry pre-printed lists of references... that includes customers from 1 to 5 years ago, as well as customers from the previous six months. This list should contain at least 100 references.

Last Name	First Name	Address Line 1	City	State
Alkire	Jan or Ed	1108 Garrett Way	Mt Juliet	TN
Arkell	Marga	312 Mills Drive	Clarksville	TN
Baker	James and Abby	118 Hampton Station Rd	Clarksville	TN
Banks	Mary & Robert	2600 Rossvie Rd	Clarksville	TN
Bowen	Donny and Michelle	4268 North Woodstock	Clarksville	TN
Brown	Maria	220 Millstone Cir	Clarksville	TN
Brush	Barbara	369 Indian Lake Road	Hendersonville	TN
Buck	Mark & Amy	2163 Powell Road	Clarksville	TN
Burnett	Carol Robert	130 2nd St	Big Sandy	TN
Butler	Sandra & Marcus	273 Andrew Jackson Drive	Clarksville	TN
Cable	Kathryn	3472 Ashland City Road	Clarksville	TN
Carney	Ray Phyllis	3052 Trough Springs Road	Clarksville	TN
Carroll	Robert	6131 Williams Circle	Cunningham	TN
Clark	Tony	4016 New Grange Ct	Clarksville	TN
Connolly	Don	2844 Brothers Road	Clarksville	TN
Corbett	Deborah and Bob	3106 Brimstead Dr	Franklin	TN
Craig	Bill and Lori	2132 Maricourt St	Old Hickory	TN
Crow Sr	Roger	4279 Coleman Rd	Woodlawn	TN
Daniel	Bethany	639 Miles Ct	Clarksville	TN
Dickerson	Marie Austin	3712 Coves Way	Adams	TN
Dunn	Lisa Thomas	162 Airport Rd		
Elder	Charles (Chuck) and Norma	1030 Maplewood Rd	Ashland City	TN
Gray	Cynthia and Dwayne	107 West Regent Drive	Clarksville	TN
Grimes	Karen & Matt	522 Als Lane	Clarksville	TN
Guin	Ricki & Tena	602 Terrace Hill Road	Mt. Juliet	TN
Halliburton	Bobby	3662 Burgess Gower Rd	Cedar Hill	TN
Hardin	Willie Gladys	530 Yvonne Drive	Clarksville	TN
Harrison	David April	10556 Moss Branch Road	Bon Aqua	TN
Haynes	Jacqueline and Thomas	1565 Cherry Tree Dr	Clarksville	TN
Hill	Gavin and Ashley	5124 Pineywoods Road	Adams	TN
Hill	Lee & Tonya	327 Yankee Drive	Clarksville	TN
Hughes	John	332 Golden Dr	Clarksville	TN
		4044 Brandywine Point Blvd		
Jackson	Mita		Old Hickory	TN
			Thompson	
Jamison	Tom and Shelley	2766 Trasbin Court	Station	TN
Johnson	Norris & Jaquiline	905 Algonquin Ct	Antioch	TN
Joiner	Darla and Ricky	497 South Tanyard Road	Cadiz	KY
Joiner	Steve Carol	161 Tylertown Rd	Clarksville	TN
Kempster	Michelle	1024 Tolliver Way	Clarksville	TN
Kirby/ Patterson	Anna and Nick	1328 Garrettsburg Rd	Clarksville	TN
Kizzire	Keith	2995 Cages Bend Rd	Gallatin	TN

Lackey	Mark	258 Chipaway Dr.	Gallatin	TN
Lampe	Stephen and JoAnn	213 Glenwood Dr	Goodlettsville	TN
Leonard	Cheri and Rob	162 East Drive	Hendersonville	TN
Loveland	Ann	1639 Old Highway 79	Dover	TN
Martin	Arnold	1228 Villa Place	Nashville	TN
Mcgee	Gene Nancy	821 Laramie Ct	Murfreesboro	TN
Melton	Lorenzo Sylvia	616 Bunker Hill Road	Clarksville	TN
Miles	Mike and Rhonda	3119 Park Hill Rd	Murfreesboro	TN
Moon	Jerry	1021 Lockartsville Road	Ashland City	TN
Morton	Ron	350 Fairway Dr	Clarksville	TN
Murphy	Bob and Claire	3250 Old Highway 48	Clarksville	TN
Murray	Thandi & Frankie	101 Love Ct	Clarksville	TN
Nash	Jerry Debbie	406 Fairview Ave	Smryna	TN
Nell	Robert Ramona	16 Abby Lynn Circle	Clarksville	TN
Oliver	David Linda	8012 Cooper Dr	Murfreesboro	TN
Orr	Andi and Greg	535 Christel Springs Drive	Clarksville	TN
Page	Leigh Kenneth	138 Clark Dr	Mt Juliet	TN
Patton	Bernice	717 Draperstown Dr	Smyrna	TN
Pool	Les and Diane	2606 Regency Park Dr	Murfreesboro	TN
Ports	Ben	24 Holliman Lane	Carthage	TN
Reeves	Shelly Jim	123 Eventide Drive	Hendersonville	TN
Richard	John Patricia	1458 MCLardy Rd	Clarksville	TN
Roland	Joanna	3400 Geneva Circle	Nashville	TN
Ronnow	Jason Rhonda	2072 Linnwood Way	Greenbriar	TN
Spratt	Judith no sp	3324 Cornerstone Dr	Murfreesboro	TN
Steele and Mr.				
Jarnigan	Steven	4403 Prescott Road	Nashville	TN
Stewart	Linda Garrett	1488 Rosson Rd	Adams	TN
Swift	Michael	4100 Helena Bay Ct	Hermitage	TN
Tate	Tery and Deloris	2305 Buena Vista Pike	Nashville	TN
Tinsley	Linda and James Benjamin	109 Mark Drive	Hopkinsville	KY
Vincent	John Millie	548 Roselawn Dr	Clarksville	TN
Wagner	Keith & Joann	1270 Tylertown Road	Clarksville	TN
Washington	Randolph Stephanie	1018 Wellsford Ct	Clarksville	TN
Watts	Diane Taylor	849 Hicks Edgen Rd	Pleasant view	TN
Wild	Maria Sylan	3662 Lake Road	Woodlawn	TN
Wilkes	Donnie	244 Burch rd	Clarksville	TN
William	James & Suzanne	230 Brandywine Dr	Clarksville	TN
Williams	Betsy	1924 Old Russellville Pike	Clarksville	TN
Williams	Kenneth	3052 Dury Ct	Clarksville	TN
Witt	Harry and Rebecca	1158 Keystone Drive	Pleasant view	TN
Yoder	Karen	2484 Settlers Trace	Clarksville	TN





## MERRELL HOME IMPROVEMENT NO TRICKS, NO PRESSURE SALES AGREEMENT

As a company representative for Merrell Home Improvement, I agree to abide by these guidelines when working with prospective customers/current customers for Merrell Home Improvement.

1. I will not smoke inside the customer's home.
2. I will not use foul language on the jobsite.
3. I will respect the customer's time by being punctual.
4. In the event I cannot be on time, I will call to alert the customer and reschedule if necessary.
5. I will keep my clothing neat and clean.
6. I will respect the customer's telephones, bathrooms, parking spaces, etc.
7. I will earnestly strive to find the best solution for each customer's needs.
8. I will not utilize high-pressure techniques to force customers to comply with my requests.
9. I will not sell products or services to customers when they are financially not able to manage the investment.
10. I will give all of my customers a fair price and a fair opportunity to consider their options.
11. I will educate my customers on all sides of the purchase decision being made.
12. I will give my customers the opportunity to express any concerns they have and work to resolve them.
13. In the event that the customer is not ready to move forward, I will respect their decision.

---

WORKER'S SIGNATURE

DATE

---

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE

DATE

## What To Look For: No Tricks, No Pressure Sales Agreement

**Why It's Important:** Many unethical contractors will resort to high-pressure sales tactics to get you to buy before you've had an opportunity to do proper due diligence on them. If you know nothing about the contractor prior to the sales call (from literature, references, online information), and they give you a low-ball price "but only if you buy right this minute," you should be wary. Any time you feel uncomfortable or unduly pressured in a sales environment, you should ask the contractor to "back off." Reputable companies will have a no-tricks, no-pressure sales pledge signed by the owner, sales manager, and each sales associate. All Merrell Home Improvement's Sales Associates sign a "Zero Sales Pressure Agreement" that is also signed by the owner to pledge that they will handle sales situations in a respectful way.

Ask your Sales Associate to see a copy of his signed agreement when he comes into your home.

## MERRELL HOME IMPROVEMENT JOBSITE CLEANUP ROSTER

As a company representative for Merrell Home Improvement, I agree to abide by these guidelines when working with prospective customers/current customers for Merrell Home Improvement.

### DAILY CLEANUP

1. Entire jobsite is to be patrolled and cleaned for trash, including:
  - Soda cans, drink bottles, cups, etc.
  - Food items, bags, containers, etc.
  - Miscellaneous trash
2. Small hand tools will be removed from the jobsite daily.
3. Any larger tools that will be left on the jobsite will be unplugged and stored in a tidy manner.
4. Any materials that will be left on the jobsite will be neatly organized and stored.
5. Any hazardous materials will be either removed completely or tightly secured.
6. Scrap materials (including metal, glass, sawdust, boards, etc.) will be disposed of.
7. Work area will be patrolled to remove any nails, screws, and other sharp objects.
8. Customer's driveway and street will be patrolled to remove nails and/or screws that could cause tire damage.
9. Work area will be left with adequate ventilation in the case of painting or other materials that cause fumes and/or odors.
10. Any work areas that leave your home exposed overnight will be covered with plastic tarps and securely taped.
11. Work area will be swept with a push broom daily (where applicable).

### AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE JOB

12. Entire work area and yard will be patrolled for trash, debris, materials, etc.
13. Magnetic nail locator will be used to find nails, screws, and other debris in customer's lawn.
14. Customer lawn will be restored to pre-job condition if damage has occurred as a result of job.
15. Customer home/yard will be inspected for any incidental damage; repairs will be made if necessary.
16. Cleanup not complete until customer signs off on this document.

---

WORKER'S SIGNATURE

DATE

---

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE

DATE

## What To Look For: Jobsite Cleanup Roster

**Why It's Important:** Your home and yard should be cleared of large debris, and dangerous materials daily by the crew. After the job is completed, a total home clean-up should take place, including nail/ screw detection (with a specialized magnet) and removal of any hazardous materials in your house or yard. Make sure your contractor has a pre-determined daily jobsite cleanup routine, and a more thorough cleanup routine upon completion of the job. All Merrell Home Improvement Sales Associates follow this multi-step cleanup roster at the end of EVERY SINGLE DAY. Show this roster to other contractors. See if they don't balk.

## MERRELL HOME IMPROVEMENT WORKER CONDUCT AGREEMENT

As a company representative for Merrell Home Improvement, I agree to abide by these guidelines when working with prospective customers/current customers for Merrell Home Improvement.

### FOR ALL WORKERS

1. I will not smoke inside the customer's home.
2. I will not use foul language on the jobsite.
3. I will not consume alcohol or drugs on the jobsite.
4. I will play any radios or music on the jobsite quietly.
5. I will keep my clothing neat and clean.
6. I will wear my identification and certification badge when on the jobsite.
7. I will respect the customer's telephones, bathrooms, parking spaces, etc.
8. I will strive to keep dirt and messes to a minimum.
9. I will put trash in the proper container and leave the jobsite clean at the end of each work day.
10. I will keep any materials or tools that are left on the jobsite in an orderly fashion at the end of each day.
11. I agree to keep a current license appropriate for my trade(s).

### FOR SUB-CONTRACTORS

12. I agree to carry general liability insurance; or make special arrangements with the contractor before any work begins.
13. I agree to be responsible for my own taxes.
14. I agree to comply with any OSHA safety regulations for my trade.
15. I will communicate any changes to the agreed work schedule to the job supervisor before the original scheduled time.
16. I agree to warranty all work and materials supplied by me for one year, and perform any callbacks or warranty work within two weeks of the request.

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WORKER'S SIGNATURE

DATE

---

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE

DATE

## What To Look For: Worker Conduct Agreement

**Why It's Important:** This compliance agreement, signed by the workers, is a 17-point contract prohibiting the use of alcohol, drugs, foul language, misconduct, or other bad behavior on a job site. It also gives appearance standards. Keep in mind that not everything is perfect, but this agreement will greatly reduce the likelihood of problems. All Merrell Home Improvement Sales Associates sign a "Worker Conduct Agreement" that is also signed by our sales manager to pledge that they will conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner. Ask your Sales Associate to see a copy of his signed agreement when he comes into your home

# Chapter 4: Workmanship

Ultimately, any contractor has to be competent to do the job right the first time. Competence comes as a result of training, experience, and good old-fashioned hard work. As you evaluate a contractor, look for signs that they can do the job right the first time.

## What To Look For: Warranty

**Why It's Important:** The biggest advantage of a Lifetime Warranty is the 'peace-of-mind' that comes from being protected should something be defective or wear out too soon. But there are 2 other important reasons we like to install products with lifetime warranties. For one, a lifetime warranty says that the manufacturer is confident about the quality and durability of its product. We only want to partner with companies that have the same philosophy as we do: stand behind what you do. The other advantage of a lifetime warranty is that they are usually transferable at least one time. This can be a nice extra selling point if you end up moving for any reason. Whether you select Merrell Home Improvement for your project or not, we suggest you always get a copy of your warranty in writing and understand the details. With us, that won't be a problem. We'll give you the warranty with all the details and answer all your questions.



## What To Look For: Project Photos For Ideas And Inspiration

**Why It's Important:** A contractor who serves his customers well should be proud to present pictures of the work they've done. Ask to see a sample of jobs they've done—for inspiration for your own project and to gauge the quality of the work they've done in the past. If no photos can be produced, that should be a major warning sign.





# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: Are you saying that you are the only company in the area that can uphold these standards?**

A: Most companies cannot uphold them, but there are several good, honest contractors to be found. Just be sure to take the time and use this guide to make sure before you hire anyone.

**Q: Can a contractor just “fake” these standards?**

A: Not likely. Most shady contractors that don't put any effort into making their businesses good, also won't put effort into faking these standards. It's a lot easier for them to just move on to their next unsuspecting victim.

**Q: What if a contractor SAYS they can do all these things, but can't show the proof?**

A: Don't settle for lip service. Demand to see the documentation for every single standard on the checklist at the end of this guide.

**Q: Are there any other things I should look for or watch out for that aren't listed in the pages of this guide?**

A: Look for some of these telltale signs of contractors who shouldn't be trusted:

- Main phone numbers that ring to cell phones
- Main phone numbers that are never answered by receptionists
- Trucks without signage on them
- No business cards or cheap business cards
- No company logo on work clothes/uniform
- Few references available
- Unresolved BBB complaints or no report at all
- Prices that are unusually low compared to other bids
- No website or very poor website
- Ability to start on your job immediately—no backlog
- Unwillingness to give any information

## An Ounce Of Prevention...

It's been said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. When the stakes are high—your home and your wallet—that saying is even more true. We hope that by reading this guide you feel more prepared to evaluate home improvement contractors and make the best decision for your family.

# Choosing the Right Contractor

When you're hiring someone to do any type of work in your home, remember that it's **your** money and **your** home. Be sure you get everything in writing, ask all the questions on your mind and clearly understand the answers you receive. Besides what we've mentioned here, there are several other ways to gather information on a company before giving anyone a dime. Check with consumer-to-consumer reporting groups like the Better Business Bureau, at [www.betterbusinessbureau.com](http://www.betterbusinessbureau.com), or Angie's List at [www.angieslist.com](http://www.angieslist.com).

If all this makes sense, and you are curious about our approach to remodeling, please give us a call. We'll be happy to answer all of your questions for free. As part of our commitment to our previous and potential new customers, at your request, we will set up a time to come to your home to answer your questions and concerns. At this time we can also determine if we can meet your remodeling needs. We provide this as a FREE, NO OBLIGATION service for you and your family.

Hopefully we can show you, as we have thousands of others, how to make your home absolutely gorgeous— something to be really proud of! Remember that when **Merrell Home Improvement** visits your home, we are not going to use high-pressure sales tactics. It is simply a chance for you to meet us and see if our services can benefit you. If, after our meeting, you believe there is no benefit to be derived from working with us, we simply leave and that is that. If, however, you do find that you would like our help, we will discuss how we proceed from there.

I can't think of a better way to work. Can you? If you think our approach is fair and honest, please consider **Merrell Home Improvement** for your construction needs.

Best of luck with your remodeling plans!

Sincerely,

Curtis Merrell  
Owner, **Merrell Home Improvement**



# Contractor Standards ✓ CHECKLIST

For your convenience, we've enclosed a checklist of all the items you'll want to look for before hiring any contractor.

What To Look For	Merrell Home Improvement	Contractor A	Contractor B
Proof of Establishment	✓		
Bank and Supplier Letters	✓		
Business License(s)	✓		
Proof of Insurance	✓		
BBB Accreditation	✓		
Memberships & Awards	✓		
Customer References	✓		
Detailed Proposal & Change Orders	✓		
No Tricks, No Pressure Sales Agreement	✓		
Jobsite Cleanup Roster	✓		
Worker Conduct Agreement	✓		
Project Photos for Ideas & Inspiration	✓		

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