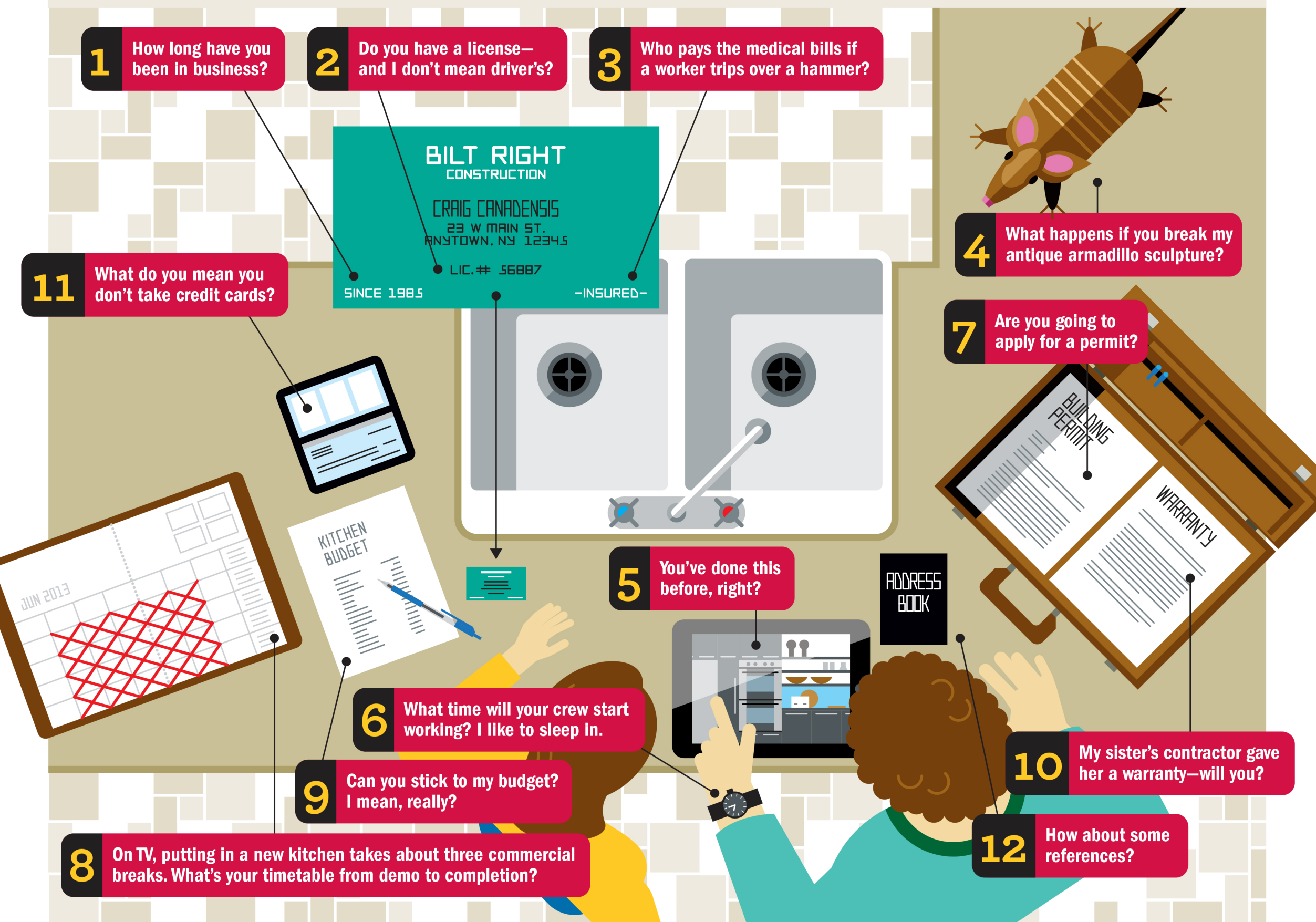


12 Things to Ask a Contractor Before Saying “You’re Hired!”

It was love at first faucet. You were so taken by the job your neighbor’s contractor did, turning her 1980s-era kitchen into a 21st century showplace, that you’re ready to book him, like, yesterday. Stop! Before hiring the only contractor you know(ish) to renovate your kitchen or bathroom, get referrals for other pros, obtain estimates and ask a lot of questions. We can help you with that last one.



- 1 How long have you been in business?**
Look for a pro with at least three to five years' experience, a good reputation and lots of satisfied customers.
- 2 Do you have a license—and I don't mean driver's?**
Most states don't require general contractors to have a license. But if a potential candidate has one, verify that the license is current with the local or state government agency that issued it. Like milk and most Hollywood romances, licenses have an expiration date.
- 3 Who pays the medical bills if a worker trips over a hammer?**
If the contractor has taken out workers' compensation insurance, the stricken employee will most likely be covered (again, check that the policy is current). If there's no insurance, you may have to cough up the cash.
- 4 What happens if you break my antique armadillo sculpture?**
General liability insurance means that if something on your property gets broken or damaged during the renovation, you'll likely get reimbursed; without it, all you may get is a sincere apology.
- 5 You've done this before, right?**
A successful contractor should be able to show you examples of projects similar in scope and budget to your own. Only consider companies that are proficient in remodeling the room you need done.
- 6 What time will your crew start working? I like to sleep in.**
The hammering and drilling often begin early in the a.m. and may continue until early evening. Since most contractors only work Monday through Friday, plan on getting your beauty rest on the weekends.
- 7 Are you going to apply for a permit?**
Building codes vary from town to town, but you generally need one whenever structural work is involved. Most contractors will take care of the application process.
- 8 On TV, putting in a new kitchen takes about three commercial breaks. What's your timetable from demo to completion?**
In the real world, a renovation can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months, depending on the scope of the work being done. If your contractor has other jobs going on at the same time, it may take even longer.
- 9 Can you stick to my budget? I mean, really?**
If your wish list and budget are rooted in reality, an experienced contractor should be able to give you much of what you want. Still, you'll probably need to prioritize which items mean the most to you.
- 10 My sister's contractor gave her a warranty—will you?**
Just as you wouldn't buy a car or a refrigerator without a warranty, don't "buy" a renovation unless it comes with one, too. Reputable contractors stand by their work, and that means giving you a written warranty.
- 11 What do you mean you don't take credit cards?**
Smaller companies may only accept checks or cash. Be prepared to make a partial payment upfront, another payment mid-job and the balance on completion.
- 12 How about some references?**
Smart contractors welcome the chance for satisfied customers to talk up their work. Call at least three recent references and ask about work habits and the job outcome. And always ask: Would you hire this person again?



Want More?

For additional remodeling tips and tricks that will save you hassle and heartache, visit:

deltafaucet.com/InspiredLiving