TCNA BULLETIN

CHOOSING YOUR TILE CONTRACTOR









TILE: It's the go-to finish when you're looking for high fashion and high function. But you might not get either if you leave it to just anyone to install. Unlike plumbing, electrical, and structural masonry trades, tile installers and the tile contractors that employ them are not generally required to meet minimum trade craft criteria to be in business.

The difference between trained, experienced installers and inexperienced installers is noticeably reflected in their work, and the difference between a quality contractor and a deficient one is reflected in their service and business operations.

Together, contractor and installer transform your concept into reality. Whether you're a design/build professional selecting tile contractors on a regular basis or a homeowner with a single tile project, it's just not possible to overestimate the importance of finding qualified contractors and installers.

THE REPUTABLE TILE CONTRACTOR

- ☑ **Operates a legitimate business**, with responsible business practices and a policy of standing behind their work.
- ☑ **Invests in continuing education** necessary to stay up-to-date on current building codes, regulations, standards, and best practices. On-the-job training is the most popular way to learn a construction trade, but formalized training is a must for ensuring correct installation methods are being taught to and used by installers on your project.
- ☑ **Carries all required business licenses and insurances**, and doesn't push liabilities for property damages or worker injuries onto others.
- ☑ **Does not misclassify workers** to avoid paying into social security, unemployment, workers' compensation, and other employee programs.
- ☑ **Has a traceable business location** so customers can be sure post-installation questions and issues are addressed and resolved.
- ☑ **Has a track record for quality and service:** Good contractors can easily produce references and verifiable documentation of their commitment to quality and service.

ARCHITECTS & SPECIFIERS

Include language in job specifications requiring qualified labor and enforce it with the GC. See the *TCNA Handbook* for a list of industry recognized prequalification programs for installers and contractors such as the CTEF Certified Tile Installer Program, the ACT (Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers) Program, the NTCA 5-Star Contractor Program, and the TCAA Trowel of Excellence Program.

GENERAL CONTRACTORS

Deliver a quality tile installation by fulfilling contractor qualification requirements in job specifications. When not included, utilize internally developed qualifications. Require proof of qualifications to be included with all project bids. Thoroughly compare estimates from bidding contractors before awarding contracts. Often, higher estimates reflect better materials and additional necessary components and tasks, like substrate preparation and movement joints.

HOMEOWNERS

Don't hesitate to ask contractors for proof of insurance, their license (where required), and their installation qualifications. Thoroughly interview bidding contractors and check several references. Utilize consumer resources available from your state on the internet and from the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation.

Call CTEF at 864-222-2131 or visit tilecareer.com for assistance finding or specifying a quality contractor.







"Because tile is a permanent finish, the lowest bid should not be the driving factor, but rather who is the most qualified to perform the scope of the work specified."

— TCNA Handbook