
HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE

Contractor Due Diligence Checklist

Most contractors hope you
don't ask the hard questions.

The scorecard

Our answers are already filled in. Ask the same 28 questions of every other bid and write their answers in the blank columns. The gaps will speak for themselves.

28 questions worth asking every contractor you interview

5 categories where projects most often go wrong

2 blank columns to score the other bids yourself

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01 / HOW YOUR PROJECT IS RUN

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Dedicated multi-layer support team	Yes, 5 contacts		
Dedicated project manager, 100-point QA	Yes, exclusive		
Documented subsurface installation proof	Yes, exclusive		
Jobsite safety & compliance program	Yes		
Daily documentation & progress tracking	Yes		
Live project tracking portal	Yes, exclusive		

02 / SCOPE, PRICE AND SCHEDULE

PAGE 8

Detailed scopes & fixed pricing	Yes		
Written change order policy	Yes		
Written schedule & timeline	Yes		
Written on-time completion guarantee	Yes, exclusive		

03 / INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

PAGE 10

General liability insurance	\$1M / \$2M		
Workers' compensation insurance	Yes		
Professional errors & omissions (E&O)	Yes, \$1M		
Subcontractor insurance certificates	Yes, all subs		

04 / LICENSING AND VETTING

PAGE 12

CSLB license status	Active, #947643		
C-27, landscaping	Held		
D-06, concrete-related services	Held		
D-12, synthetic products	Held		
Subcontractors licensed for their trade	Yes, all subs		
HIS license (sales representative)	Yes		
Employee background checks	Federal & state		

05 / TRACK RECORD AND STABILITY

PAGE 15

Years in business	17+ years		
Crew experience	35+ years		
Completed installations	6,000+ built		
Third-party certifications	CMHA & BBB A+		
Verified company reviews	2,000+ five-star		
Company financial health	A+, debt-free		
Installation warranty	2 years, by scope		

The pages that follow explain what each line means, and why it protects you. Ask any contractor to show documentation for their answers. A company that operates this way will have it ready.

How your project is run

Who is accountable, who is actually on site, and how you know what happened on the days you weren't there.

01

Dedicated multi-layer support team

YES, 5 CONTACTS

We provide a structured, multi-layer support system that goes far beyond the one-person contact most contractors offer. Your project has five dedicated points of contact: your Senior Designer, our Lead Designer, our Senior Office Manager, your Project Manager, and our General Manager. If one team member is unavailable, another steps in instantly. Your project never goes on pause, communication never breaks down, and you are never left wondering what is happening or who to call.

02

Dedicated project manager

YES, 100-POINT QA

We assign a dedicated project manager to every job. They oversee each phase, coordinate crews and subs, enforce ICPI/CMHA standards, ensure code and permit compliance, and verify that every detail matches your approved design, with no deviations, shortcuts, or unexplained changes in the field. Our PMs also run a proprietary **100-Point Quality Assurance Checklist**, something almost no contractor in San Diego uses. It requires photo and video documentation at every critical stage (base prep, compaction, drainage, utilities, layout, and finishing) before the project can move forward.

03

**Documented
subsurface
installation proof**

IID EXCLUSIVE

The most important structural elements of your project are buried underground. We document every critical subsurface phase with before, during, and after photos and video: base prep, compaction, drainage systems, utilities, edge restraints, wall footings, and more. If a problem ever arises, we can show exactly what was installed and how it was installed, protecting you from blame, liability, and costly repairs down the road. **We pioneered this approach in the San Diego market**, and while a few competitors attempt to imitate it, none match our consistency or standards.

04

**Jobsite safety &
compliance program**

YES

We follow a structured jobsite safety and compliance program modeled after commercial construction standards, which almost no residential contractor does: daily site walk-throughs, utility verification, trench and gas-line compliance checks, equipment safety protocols, and clear expectations for every crew on site. While subcontractors manage their own teams, we monitor jobsite conditions, reinforce safety expectations, and address issues proactively, reducing risk, preventing accidents, and protecting your home.

05

Daily documentation & progress tracking

YES

We document every day of your project with jobsite photos, notes, and progress updates logged directly into your project portal. You always know exactly what was done, what is happening next, and who is on site. That record feeds your Live Project Tracking Portal and stands as proof long after the crew has gone.

06

Live project tracking portal

IID EXCLUSIVE

We are the only contractor in Southern California that provides clients with a live project tracking portal. Through our proprietary system you can view schedules, progress updates, photos, phase completions, and upcoming milestones in real time. No guesswork, no chasing anyone for updates, and no wondering what happened on your property while you were at work.

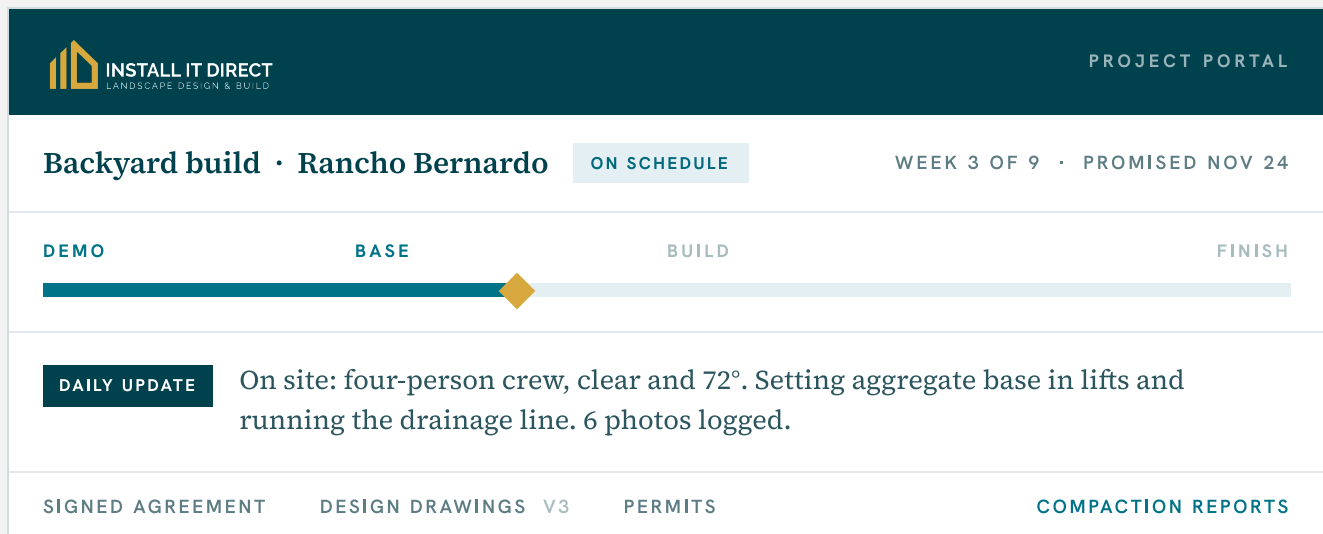


FIGURE · YOUR PORTAL, LIVE FROM THE PRE-CONSTRUCTION WALK ONWARD

Scope, price and schedule

Exactly what you are buying, exactly what it costs, and exactly when it will be finished, in writing, before work starts.

07

Detailed scopes & fixed pricing

YES

We provide detailed, line-item scopes with fixed pricing: no vague allowances, no hidden line items, and no surprise charges halfway through your project. You always know exactly what is included, what it costs, and what will be delivered. The low quote that grows after signing is one of the oldest tactics in the trade. A fixed line-item scope makes it impossible.

08

Written change order policy

YES

Any requested addition or adjustment is documented in writing with pricing confirmed before work proceeds: no surprise charges, no verbal agreements, and no mid-project cost traps. This protects you from the vague or inflated change orders many contractors use to raise the price after construction has already started. Ours cannot move without your signature.

09

Written schedule & timeline

YES

We provide a written schedule outlining each phase of your project: start date, duration of each scope item, major milestones, and expected completion. Most contractors work without a real schedule, which leads to delays, excuses, and poor coordination. Ours turns the timeline into something you can hold us to.

10

Written on-time completion guarantee

IID EXCLUSIVE

We offer the only written On-Time Completion Guarantee in San Diego County. If we miss our agreed completion window, we compensate you until the project is finished. Open-ended delay is what happens when a contractor juggles too many jobs or works without a real schedule. Here, the cost of it is ours, not yours.

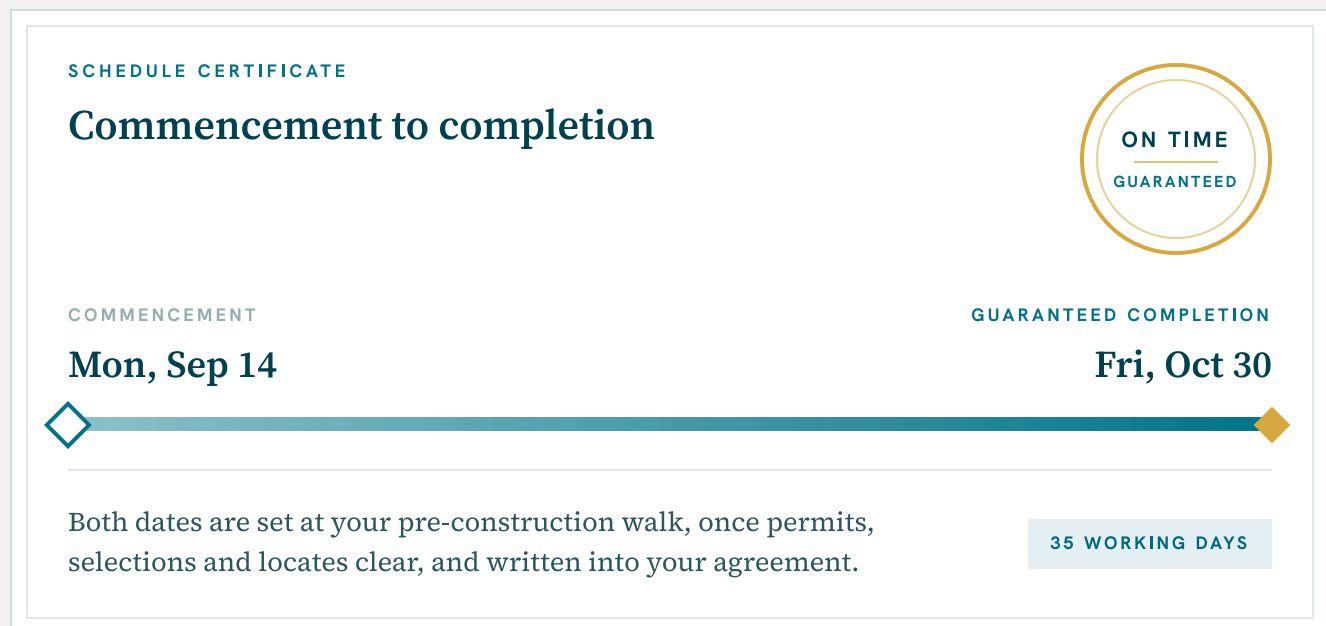


FIGURE • EXAMPLE CERTIFICATE. YOUR DATES AND DURATION ARE SET AT THE WALK

Insurance and liability

Who pays when something goes wrong on your property. If the contractor is underinsured, the answer is usually you.

\$2M

general liability, aggregate

\$1Mgeneral liability, per
occurrence**4**policies we carry, plus
certificates from every sub

11

General liability insurance

\$1M / \$2M

We carry Commercial General Liability insurance with limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 general aggregate. Accidental property damage or injury on your job site is covered by our policy, not your homeowner's insurance. You are welcome to request a copy of our certificate at any time.

12

Workers' compensation insurance

YES

We carry full workers' compensation insurance, which protects you if anyone on our team is injured while working on your property. Their medical bills and lost wages are covered by our policy, not by you and not by your homeowner's insurance. Your exposure is removed, and our crew works knowing they are covered.

13

Professional errors & omissions insurance

\$1M

We carry Professional Errors & Omissions (E&O) insurance, which protects you if there is a mistake in the design, planning, or administrative side of your project. If an oversight or error leads to financial loss, our policy covers it, including legal defense if needed. **This coverage is uncommon in our industry** and adds real protection on complex, design-driven projects.

14

Subcontractor insurance

YES, ALL SUBS

All subcontractors we use carry their own active liability and workers' compensation insurance. The subcontractor performing the work is the first party responsible if an accident, injury, or property damage occurs. **If a subcontractor is uninsured, the liability can fall back on you, even if they were at fault.** We provide insurance certificates for every subcontractor we use, and you are always welcome to request verification.

 INSTALL IT DIRECT LANDSCAPE DESIGN & BUILD COVERAGE SUMMARY · 2025-2026	
Commercial general liability	\$1,000,000 occurrence · \$2,000,000 aggregate
Products & completed operations	\$2,000,000 aggregate
Workers' compensation & employers' liability	Statutory · \$1,000,000 each accident
Professional errors & omissions	\$1,000,000
Subcontractor certificates	On file for every sub on your job
CARRIERS	Champlain Specialty Insurance Company, Republic Indemnity Company of America, and Lloyd's. A full ACORD certificate naming you as certificate holder is issued by our broker before work begins.

FIGURE · FROM OUR ACORD 25 CERTIFICATE, POLICY YEAR 2025-2026

Licensing and vetting

What the State of California has independently verified, and who we allow onto your property.

CSLB LICENSE

#947643

Active & in good standing

C-27

D-06

D-12

Three classifications covering landscape construction, concrete, and synthetic turf.

15

License status

ACTIVE, #947643

Hiring a licensed contractor is not a technicality. It is your legal and financial protection. An active CSLB license gives you four safeguards. **Verified competence:** the contractor has passed state exams and met experience requirements. **Financial protection:** licensed contractors must carry a bond, which can compensate you if a contractor abandons a project, performs negligent work, or violates state law. **Enforcement and recourse:** the CSLB provides mediation, complaint handling, and enforcement, none of which exist with an unlicensed contractor. **Legal compliance:** in California, hiring an unlicensed contractor for work over \$500 is illegal and exposes you to liability for injuries, damages, and unpaid wages.

16

Classification
C-27, landscaping

HELD

The C-27 Landscaping Contractor license is the required CSLB classification for landscape construction in California. It confirms we are legally qualified to perform the full scope of outdoor living work (grading, drainage, irrigation, hardscape, planting, and landscape construction) and that we meet the state's standards for experience, competency, and code compliance.

17

Classification
**D-06, concrete-
related services**

HELD

The D-06 Concrete-Related Services license is a specialized CSLB classification confirming the expertise to perform concrete installations such as foundations, footings, slabs, pads, block work, and other structural or hardscape components that support your outdoor living space. Concrete is permanent and expensive to fix if it is done wrong, so this ensures those elements are installed correctly, safely, and to California building standards.

18

Classification D-12,
synthetic products

HELD

The D-12 Synthetic Products license is required for installing artificial turf and other synthetic surfacing materials. It confirms the training and expertise to install turf systems correctly (base preparation, grading, drainage, seams, infill, and edging) so your turf drains properly, looks natural, and performs for years without premature wear or failure.

19

Subcontractor licensing

YES, ALL SUBS

All subcontractors we use are properly licensed for the specific trades they perform. California requires licensed professionals for grading, electrical, plumbing, gas, concrete, and other specialized scopes. Using licensed subcontractors protects you from liability, prevents voided warranties, and ensures work meets state code and inspection standards. We are always happy to provide proof of licensing and insurance for every subcontractor.

20

HIS license

YES

In California, any representative who meets with you, discusses your project, or presents a contract must hold a valid Home Improvement Salesperson (HIS) license. It confirms the individual is registered with the CSLB, has passed a background check, and is legally authorized to negotiate and sign home improvement agreements. Working with an unlicensed salesperson is a violation of state law. Always ask for the representative's HIS license number. We are happy to provide ours at any time.

21

Employee background checks

FEDERAL & STATE

We require federal and state background checks for every employee before they are hired. This screening verifies identity, reviews criminal history, and confirms that only trustworthy, vetted individuals are allowed on your property. Your safety and the security of your home are non-negotiable, and our hiring standards reflect that.

Track record and stability

Whether the company will still be standing, and solvent, when you need it to honor its word.

22

Years in business

17+ YEARS

We have been building in San Diego County for more than 17 years. That longevity means we have mastered the local codes, soils, slopes, drainage requirements, and permitting nuances that directly affect the safety and durability of your project. **A contractor does not stay in business this long without delivering consistent results.** Very few contractors in this industry maintain that record. Most close, change names, or reorganize every few years, which leaves homeowners unprotected.

23

Crew experience

35+ YEARS

Our installation crews bring more than 35 years of combined, hands-on experience in outdoor living construction. They have mastered the technical details that determine whether a project lasts: base prep, grading, drainage, compaction, edge restraints, and precision layout. Experienced crews do not figure it out as they go. They install it correctly the first time and identify issues before they become problems.

24

Completed installations

6,000+ BUILT

We have completed more than **6,000 outdoor living installations across San Diego County**. At that volume we have seen every soil type, slope condition, drainage challenge, and design scenario in this county, so your project is planned from ground we know rather than assumptions made on paper. It also means you benefit from years of refined process, proven installation methods, and real-world expertise that newer or smaller contractors simply do not have.

25

Special certifications

CMHA & BBB A+

Two third-party credentials validate quality, professionalism, and accountability. **CMHA** (Concrete Masonry & Hardscapes Association, formerly ICPI) is the industry's leading certification for paver installation excellence. It confirms our team is trained to the highest standards for base preparation, grading, compaction, edge restraints, jointing, and long-term system performance. **BBB A+** accreditation reflects years of consistent, ethical business practices, transparent communication, and outstanding client satisfaction.

26

Company reviews

2,000+ FIVE-STAR

We have earned more than **2,000 five-star reviews** across Yelp, Google, BBB, Houzz, Angi, HomeAdvisor, and Nextdoor. That volume of verified feedback is extremely rare in this industry, and it gives you a clear picture of what it is like to work with us, from communication and craftsmanship to reliability and follow-through. If a contractor cannot easily point you to verified reviews, or only shows cherry-picked screenshots, that is a red flag.

27

Company financial health

EXCELLENT (A+),
DEBT-FREE

We operate as a debt-free company. We purchase materials upfront or in real time, pay our crews weekly, and do not rely on loans, credit float, or vendor financing to run our projects. Projects do not get delayed or abandoned because a contractor cannot afford materials or labor. There is no cost-cutting behind the scenes: no cheap crews, no inferior materials, no reduced supervision. Your deposit is used on your project, not to cover shortfalls on someone else's job. **Financial instability is what most often drives contractors to abandon projects, cut corners, or disappear.**

Installation warranty

2 YEARS ON MOST
SCOPE

Our warranty is written per scope of work rather than as one blanket number, with the full terms in Exhibit A of your Home Improvement Contract. Most of what we build carries two years.

2 YEARS	Interlocking pavers, porcelain pavers, walls, drainage, lighting, turf
1 YEAR	Natural stone, concrete, masonry, irrigation, pergolas, fire features, BBQ and appliances, decomposed granite
PLANTING	Plant health depends on watering and maintenance after installation, so planting is not covered by default. Coverage is available when purchased in writing.

Some companies advertise 25- and 30-year installation warranties layered with exclusions that make them unusable in practice. Specific terms you can read before you sign are worth more than a long number. What protects you is a realistic, enforceable warranty, thousands of successful installations behind it, and a company that has been in business long enough to honor it.

Coverage begins at the Certificate of Completion, extends to the original owner, and requires the project to be paid in full.

Before you hire anyone, ask yourself: which of these risks am I willing to take on my home?

These are the reasons homeowners get burned, and why most regret choosing the cheapest bid. When you see how much can go wrong, it becomes obvious why choosing the right contractor matters more than choosing the lowest price.

Red flags to watch for

Ten answers that should stop a conversation. Each one has a direct cost, and it is almost always paid by the homeowner.

01 No workers' compensation insurance

Their injury becomes your liability.

02 Vague scopes or allowances

Hidden cost traps.

03 No documented subsurface work

The most important parts go unseen.

04 No licensed subcontractors

Illegal and risky.

05 No jobsite supervision

Crews left unsupervised cut corners.

06 No dedicated project manager

One overloaded contact, not a support team. They send whoever is available.

07 No written schedule

Delays and excuses.

08 No financial stability

Contractors often use your deposit to finish someone else's job.

09 No E&O coverage

Design and planning errors land on you.

10 No history of honoring warranties

A warranty is worthless if the company will not be there to back it.

AFTER EACH INTERVIEW

Notes

What each contractor said, and what they could not show you.

INSTALL IT DIRECT

BID #1

BID #2

HOWEVER YOU CHOOSE

Even if you do not choose us, please use this checklist with every contractor you interview. Skipping due diligence is the #1 cause of project delays, cost overruns, poor workmanship, and contractor disputes. The wrong choice can cost far more than the lowest bid. The right due diligence protects your home, your money, and your time.