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A: In the construction business, a contractor is a person or organization who is hired by a client to complete an element or elements of a building project. There are several types of contractors with various roles and responsibilities, so the type of contractor hired will depend on the nature of the job. Typically speaking, however, the term "contractor" will refer to either a general contractor or a subcontractor. Looking to hire a professional contractor for an upcoming home improvement project? Learn all about what a contractor is, the different types of contractors, and how they contribute to the home renovation process. Need a contractor for your home renovation? Top-rated pros are just a click away. Get free, no-commitment project estimates from contractors near you. + Photo: istockphoto.com A general contractor (or GC) is hired by a client to take a set of plans and ensure the building project is completed on a timeline. They coordinate and supervise workers and their tasks, order materials, and handle the paperwork and billing processes. The GC makes a profit by marking up labor and materials costs by a percentage (usually between 10 to 30 percent). This contract stipulation is also known as a cost-plus contract. Some handy homeowners may consider being their own general contractor. While this can be an effective means of saving money and ensuring that the project meets expectations, it's also crucial for homeowners to consider whether they have the time, money, management skills, and home renovation expertise to take on this task. Acting as one's own GC also requires a person to have their own builder's risk or file policy (at minimum, during the building phase) in the event that something goes wrong. A contractor will make your home redo go smoothly Top-rated pros are just a click away. Get free, no-commitment project estimates from contractors near you. + While most contractors fall under the category of general contractor, there are several different types of contractors, including construction managers, design-build contractors, and prime contractors. A construction manager is typically hired to help during the design process, helping the team develop the project and even initiate the construction phase. Conversely, a design-build contractor stays with a project from start to finish. They are in charge of both designing the project and managing its development, and in some cases may even help with the physical construction or maintenance. A prime contractor is a broad category that refers to the relationship between a contractor and their clients. Prime contractors and their clients develop long-term commitments that may include future or ongoing projects. This is often seen in large-scale clients, such as organizations that frequently need construction work. Photo: istockphoto.com While some general contractors will tackle parts of the building process, they will generally hire subcontractors to complete specific parts of the project. GCs often have long-standing relationships with subcontractors who possess specific skill sets, allowing them access to specialized expertise for even the most niche of project requirements. Subcontractors tend to focus their work in a single area such as plumbing, electrical work, HVAC, and tiling or flooring. These subcontractors may be self-employed or they may work under a subcontracting business. Homeowners will likely have little to no interaction with subcontractors, as they are hired, managed, and paid per project by the general contractor. Need a contractor for your home renovation? Top-rated pros are just a click away. Get free, no-commitment project estimates from contractors near you. + A contractor will ensure quality and compliance through all stages of the home renovation process—perhaps the most important aspect of the job. If anything goes wrong or does not meet requirements, it is the contractor's job to correct the problem and cover any associated costs. When a general contractor obtains building permits, they are filing under their business name. This holds them accountable for following any required building codes, as well as paying any fines if these codes are not followed. In addition to maintaining legal compliance, a GC will also ensure that the conditions for product or material warranties are met. For example, it is common for roofs and windows to have warranties that are only valid if the work is performed by a qualified and certified professional. Photo: istockphoto.com In the event that something goes wrong in the building process, such as property damage or on-site injuries, the contractor should carry liability insurance. In many states, contractors are legally required to purchase this insurance in order to obtain a business license. A contractor typically will carry general liability insurance, also known as commercial general liability (CGL) insurance, to cover third-party property damage and customer injury. A general contractor may also carry a separate worker's compensation policy, which relieves homeowners from liability for any injuries sustained to employees on the job site. Let a contractor do the hard work for you Top-rated pros are just a click away. Get free, no-commitment project estimates from contractors near you. + Before tackling a home improvement project, it's worth considering what type of professional is best for the job. In some cases, especially with large-scale or complex projects, a general contractor is necessary. Other times, a specific subcontractor or even a skilled general handyman can tackle the task. If the intended project requires multiple subcontractors, will take an extended period of time, or requires dealing with municipal building codes, look into hiring a general contractor. The GC has the time, resources and skill set necessary to successfully manage all aspects of the renovation from start to finish. Conversely, if the project only requires one or two subcontractors, will only take a short time, or does not have municipal building code requirements, a client may be able to oversee (or even complete) the project themselves. Generally speaking, it is advised for homeowners to only tackle renovation projects they can do skillfully and confidently. Otherwise, it's best to hire a professional for their insight and expertise. Keeping your grass green and your plants thriving doesn't just take a green thumb—it starts with the right tools and supplies. Building Contractors coordinate and oversee a wide variety of building projects. Building Contractor Job Description, Key Duties and Responsibilities This post provides exhaustive information on the job description of a building contractor, to help you learn the work they do. It highlights the key tasks, duties, and responsibilities that commonly make up the building contractor work description in most organizations. (You will be able to download the building contractor job description template in pdf below.) It also presents the major requirements you will need to fulfill to be hired for the building contractor role by most employers/recruiters. Please, read on to improve your knowledge of the building contractor career: What Does a Building Contractor Do? A building contractor is responsible for coordinating construction projects and managing various aspects of building sites. The building contractor job description entails carrying out a wide range of duties such as making sure that construction projects are completed on time and within budget, supervising and directing renovation work, remodeling existing houses, and ensuring that all operations are in strict adherence to regional and national regulations. In other words, a building contractor refers to one who coordinates and oversees a wide variety of projects, such as the building of all types of public, residential, commercial, and industrial structures, as well as memorials, roads, and bridges. He/she ensures schedules and directs all construction processes to ensure that projects meet design specifications, while also making sure that construction projects are completed on time and within budget. An important part of the building contractor's tasks is to take charge of all aspects of a construction project from conception to completion. He/she may also be required to consult with clients during the design phase to assist in the process of refining construction plans and controlling costs. Another major duty of a building contractor is to prepare cost estimates, budgets, and work timetables, which involve coming up with ways through which costs can be minimized and scheduling work time and shifts for construction workers to ensure that the construction project is being carried out efficiently and effectively. It is also the duty of a building contractor to ensure that construction workers, contractors, subcontractors, and other professionals on the construction site have an adequate understanding of the project by interpreting and explaining the scope of the contract and technical information to them. A building contractor must also accurately monitor and report work progress, as he/she will be required to gather and give reports on the construction work progress and budget matters to clients and/or key stakeholders. Additionally, construction sites are composed of a lot of different dangerous materials and/or equipment, therefore, it is highly important that a building contractor ensures that safety guidelines and policies are strictly adhered to on construction sites. If you are seeking to work as a building contractor, some of the required skills and qualities you will need to meet include strong business and negotiation skills, excellent verbal and written communication skills, and good project management skills. Others are adequate experience with the utilization of project management software, strong interpersonal skills, and good problem-solving skills; attention to detail, strong analytical skills, and leadership skills. You will also need to possess good technical skills, decision-making skills, and excellent time management skills. In terms of academic qualifications, an ideal candidate for the building contractor role is required to possess a Bachelor's degree in Construction Science, Construction Management, Architecture, or Engineering, or in a related discipline. Building Contractor Salary: The average salary for a building contractor according to Payscale is \$55,900 annually. Building Contractor Job Description Example/Sample/Template Building contractors perform the responsibilities: Overseeing and leading a team of specialized contractors and other personnel Preparing cost estimates, budgets, and work schedules Ensuring that safety rules and guidelines are followed on construction sites at all times Inspecting and reviewing the quality of work done by employed workers and subcontractors Keeping up-to-date and accurate financial records Hiring and/or selecting subcontractors and contractors while also scheduling and coordinating their activities Ensuring that legal requirements, building, and safety codes, and other regulations are strictly complied with Working collaboratively with architects, engineers, and other construction specialists. Download building contractor job description template (pdf) If you are writing a resume or CV for a new job and are currently working as a building contractor or have worked in that role in the past, you should show the experience you got from the job by including the professional experience section in your resume/CV. The professional or work experience part of your resume or CV helps you to effectively show to recruiters/employers that you have been successful in performing the duties and responsibilities of a building contractor. Employers/recruiters will be more likely to give you an appointment for an interview after learning of your work experience, especially if the new position that you are applying for requires having some building contractor work experience to succeed in it. You can create an effective professional experience section for your resume or CV by applying the duties and responsibilities provided in the above building contractor job description example. (Learn how to make an effective resume applying the Employer-focused Resume Writing Technique) Building Contractor Requirements - Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities for Career Success If you are seeking the building contractor job, here are major requirements employers/recruiters may want you to meet to be considered for hiring: Strong analytical skills, since a building contractor must plan project strategies, tackle and fix unexpected issues that may arise throughout the project Good business skills, since he/she must be able to address budget matters and also supervise workers, while also choosing competent and efficient staff and maintaining good relationships with them Good decision-making skills, which enable a building contractor to make choices regarding construction projects, while also being fully aware of the implications of his/her choices Strong leadership skills, since a building contractor must effectively delegate tasks to construction workers, contractors, and subcontractors, and also supervise them Excellent time-management skills, since construction projects must be completed on time and within budget Several years of professional and proven-work experience A Bachelor's degree in Construction Science, Construction Management, Architecture, Engineering, or in a related field. Conclusion This post is helpful to individuals interested in the building contractor career. They will be able to increase their knowledge of the duties and responsibilities that building contractors perform and so will be able to make the best decision concerning their career choice. This post is also useful to recruiters/employers needing to hire for the building contractor position in their companies. They can apply the building contractor job description sample provided above in making a detailed description of the vacant position in their companies for use in the hiring process. See all tests In any construction project there are three main parties involved: the owner or client, the management team, and the contractor. The building contractor plans and coordinates construction activities, and must complete the project within the established time and budget. Contractors are responsible for the entire construction process, and must determine the best methods to finish the project as specified. General Roles & Responsibilities of a Building Contractor In general terms, a contractor is responsible for planning, leading, executing, supervising and inspecting a building construction project. The responsibility extends from the beginning to the end of the project, regardless of its scope. Contractors accomplish their duties by planning activities, supervising workers, and ensuring the project follows local codes and laws. A contractor may hire subcontractors for specialized areas, such as electrical installations and HVAC systems. Manage your contractors effectively and complete your projects on time and on budget. Specific Roles and Duties of a Building Contractor As mentioned before, a building contractor has multiple responsibilities, which may vary depending on the contract. There are many roles a contractor can assume during different stages of a project, and this section covers the most common ones. Project Planning Every project has a master schedule that describes all activities, along with their time distribution and planned budget. This schedule has a completion date that contractors must meet, and hefty penalties normally apply for missing the deadline. A late completion can only be justified if the project was delayed by external factors beyond the contractor's control, such as extreme weather. The first duty of a building contractor is creating a project plan to deliver it on time. Some responsibilities include: Planning all crucial project development and implementation details. Determining the construction equipment and material requirements, and planning their procurement. Predicting possible changes and creating risk mitigation strategies. Meeting any legal and regulatory issues. Establishing effective communication among all project participants. The building contractor must establish a budget for the construction project, and follow it as closely as possible. The budget is a useful tool to track project costs, since contractors can detect waste by comparing their actual expenses with the planned budget. Project Management The contractor needs to complete the project on time, and this involves many construction management activities: Ensuring funds are available to keep the project moving Purchasing materials with enough anticipation for them to reach the site when needed Purchasing or renting the construction equipment required for the project Interviewing and hiring subcontractors to complete specialized work Creating progress reports to justify intermediate payments Building contractors are also responsible for their personnel, making sure their staff has the right size and technical skills. Contractors also manage payroll for their own employees, and subcontractor payments. Project Tracking Project tracking is fundamental to complete the work according to contract specifications and schedules. In addition to tracking progress, contractors must prevent disruption. This involves several complementary activities: Quality control Using cost-effective construction methods Ensuring a constant supply of materials, and scheduling purchases well in advance Construction site safety During the construction process, the building contractor is responsible for tracking progress and managing any necessary changes. Of course, contractors must always have the project scope, time and budget in mind when making decisions. Legal and Regulatory Issues Contractors have a handful of responsibilities in terms of legal and regulatory issues. They must acquire all the necessary permits and licenses before starting the project, while covering any fees and taxes that apply. Also, the entire construction process must follow local legislation and building codes. Being unaware of legal requirements is not a valid excuse in construction projects, which means that contractors must have updated knowledge. With the right construction permits and contractor licenses, the project can progress without disruption. Health and Safety Issues The contractor must guarantee health and safety in the construction site, by implementing adequate procedures and raising awareness among workers. The contractor is also responsible for the proper operation of equipment and preventing any accidents from misuse. The contractor deals with any emergencies and unforeseen issues at the project site, and must report them to the client's supervision staff. Conclusion Building contractors have many roles during the different stages of construction, and each role comes with different responsibilities. Contractors should be capable of managing uncertainty and taking decisions on a daily basis. The track record of a contractor is also very important, since those with ample experience can respond better to common issues in projects. Nearby Engineers New York Engineers has a MEP design track record of 1,000+ projects. Contact us via email (info@ny-engineers.com) or phone (786) 788-0295/212-575-5300, and make sure your building systems meet codes. A contractor is an organisation or individual who directly employs or engages construction workers or as part of their business carries out, manages or controls construction work (e.g. building, altering, maintaining or demolishing). Contractors include sub-contractors, any individual, sole trader or self-employed worker. Why are contractors important in ensuring construction is carried out in a way that avoids harm? Contractors and the workers under their control are those most at risk of injury and ill health on a construction site. They have an important role in planning, managing and monitoring the work (in liaison with the principal contractor where there is more than one contractor) to ensure risks are properly controlled. Because they have first-hand experience in doing the actual work, they are in a good position to influence their own health and safety and that of others. When do contractor duties start? Contractor duties apply as soon as they are appointed to the project to carry out construction work. A contractor should be appointed early enough in the project to allow them sufficient time to plan the work and identify any risks to health and safety. Details of any planning must be recorded as a construction phase plan. On a project involving more than one contractor, developing the construction phase plan will be the responsibility of the principal contractor, and they must provide a contractor with information within it that is relevant to their work. The effort devoted to planning should be proportionate to the complexity of the project and the risks involved. What skills, knowledge and experience does a contractor need to carry out their duties in a way that ensures health and safety? A contractor must be able to demonstrate that they have the skills, knowledge and experience and, where an organisation, the organisational capability to carry out the work safely and without risk to health. Similarly, when a contractor employs or appoints an individual to carry out construction work, they must make sure the individual has the skills, knowledge, experience and training to carry out the work in a way that secures health and safety, or is in the process of obtaining them. The required level of skills, knowledge and experience (and training where required) should be proportionate to the complexity of the work and the range and nature of the risks involved. Examples of demonstrating skills, knowledge and experience (and training where required) might include: records of continuing professional development (CPD) including training records membership of professional bodies references from previous construction work Examples of demonstrating organisational capability might involve: using pre-qualification assessment services from third party assessors, such as those who are members of Safety Schemes in Procurement Forum (SSIP) self-assessing using the standard health and safety pre-qualification questions in Publicly Available Specification PAS 91 What you need to do Guidance on what a contractor needs to do to carry out their duties on both commercial and domestic projects under CDM 2015 is available on the roles and responsibilities of a contractor page.