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How to Choose a Solar Contractor

You've decided that installing solar panels on your property makes sense for you and you're ready to take the next step. You want to search for a solar contractor. What should you be looking for?

Ask each solar contractor what his specialty is. Some contractors only do residential, some do only commercial and some do both. You obviously want to find a contractor who is experienced in the type of installation that you need.

Lately, a lot of different type of tradespeople have come into the solar installation market – roofers, electricians, general construction laborers. You want a company that has the requisite knowledge and experience. If the contractor cannot do the entire job, find out who else they bring in to help out and interview that company as well.

Ask for references from past clients. Find out how long ago the installation was. You want to speak with clients whose installations went in awhile ago to find out whether there were any problems with the installation itself (and how the contractor handled the problems), whether the solar panels perform as promised, and if there has been a need for any kind of follow-up from the contractor.

Ask about warranties. The manufacturers give a warranty for the panels themselves and some contractors extend the warranties on their own.

Find out about the tax incentives that you will be entitled to and whether the contractor helps you get the incentives or refers you to someone who will fill out any necessary paperwork.

Find out about whether your town will require permits for the installation and whether you need to get the permits or the installer will take care of it for you.

You will also need to ask about licensing, bonding and whether they carry insurance in case of an accident on the job. Make sure you see proof of the licensing, bonding and insurance.

Finally, ask them if they check after installation to ensure that there are no problems. You want to make sure that the system is working the way you were promised by the contractor.